The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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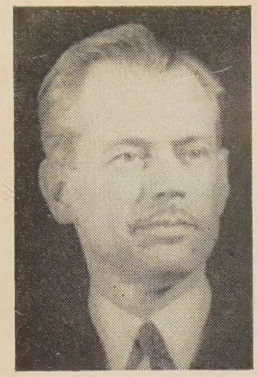

By John C. Irwin

THE STATUS OF

SOME twenty-five thousand sermons are preached in forty thousand Methodist pulpits each Sunday. This assumes that circuit pastors use variations of the same sermon at their various points. It also disregards evening services which, though mostly discontinued in northern cities, still continue in many other sections. Multiplied by 52 weeks of the year, the result is a statistic which should gratify even Mr. Wesely!

Who is competent to express a judgment as to the quality of this vast sermonic output? Obviously it ranges from very good to very bad. In the nature of the Methodist Church it is equally obvious that what one person considers excellent, another may consider bad. Further, who hears a broad enough cross section of this preaching to have a valid opinion? Bishops, superintendents, church officials and professors travel widely in the connection, but rarely hear any voice but their own. Perhaps a devout Methodist traveling salesman or business executive would be the proper person to evaluate the state of Methodist preaching.

Basis of Analysis

In issues of The Pulpit from last September through May there were eleven sermons by Methodists. Five of the authors preach in the south, five in the north and one in California. One preacher is a bishop, one an educator, six are city pastors, one ministers in a small town, and two are college pastors. Thus the sample, though small, is geographically representative, but fails to reflect the preaching in the country church. This writer hears at least 300 sermons a year by his students, and a not inconsiderable number by representative parish preachers. These seminarians come from every section of the denomination and from every type of church. Many of them are now serving country parishes. It would seem a valid assumption that their sermons reflect in some degree th kind of preaching they have heard in the churche of their origin. On the basis of the eleven sermon which have found their way into The Pulpit an the wider sample represented by student an parish preaching, certain facts seem evident.

Level Is High

The general level of Methodist preaching i high. This evaluation refers both to craftsmanshi and to content. In the nine issues of The Pulpi studied there were almost sixty sermons. Tha one-sixth were by Methodists would seem to in dicate that the successors of the circuit rider are doing their share of good preaching. A fe months ago John R. Scotford occasioned consider able controversy by writing that the day of grea preachers is over. Without at the moment arguin whether Chappell and Sockman rank with Beeche and Brooks, I would support the second half o Dr. Scotford's thesis—"the average sermon get steadily better." One can go today into almos any county seat town and hear able preaching.

One small rural Methodist conference that know well has a number of homespun preacher with no reputation beyond their own localitie who can move men's minds and hearts, and at leas one whom I have heard rise on occasion to rea greatness. Every year the student sermons hear reveal from six to ten young men unde whose preaching the most exacting hearer migh with profit sit regularly. Across the church, am satisfied, there exists a level of competen substantial preaching well above the average o the "good old days" when Quayle, Mouzon an MacDowell were among the great pulpit orator but behind them was a rank and file which ha to be moved every few years so that they coul turn over their barrels.

Topical Preaching Prevails

The prevailing style of Methodist preachin is topical. Of the eleven sermons in The Pulpi one was an exposition of the parable of th workers in the vineyard and another was a deve opment of the text, "I appeal to Rome." And thes two scriptural sermons were by the old maste Clovis Chappell and Bishop Francis McConnel The other nine sermons were all developed to

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Garrett professor of preaching believes Methodists need to return to Wesleyan emphasis on Christian experience

METHODIST PREACHING

ically. Now the preachers concerned may not agree, for five of them had texts firmly nailed at their mastheads; but in none did the structure and development of the sermon really attempt to discover the meaning for today of a biblical passage.

There are two ways in which a sermon may grow. In one case the preacher starts with a specific biblical passage. He attempts without preconception to discover what this passage says and to determine its meaning for our times. In the other case the preacher begins with concern for some current problem or interest and seeks to shed light upon it from all the resources at his command. If he uses biblical material—and he often does not—it is not with intent to explore one text or passage, but to cite relevant quotations from here and there that advance his argument.

Subject Matter

It is this last or topical style that seems to be dominant in current Methodist pulpits. Many of the preachers do not themselves realize that they are not preaching biblical sermons. They faithfully look up a text in the concordance with which to begin sermons they have already developed topically. But this bow to tradition can scarcely be called "opening up the Scriptures." That topical preaching is widely prevalent in the church is supported by the fact that most student sermons, if unprescribed, fall into this mold. When a scriptural development is required, the young preachers have great difficulty. Can this be because they have seldom heard real biblical preaching?

The topical sermon came into popularity as a protest against a type of textual sermonizing which was academic and irrelevant to current life. But now that most Methodist congregations grant the pastor's right to discuss the Christian implications of any subject he chooses, is it not time to combine the biblical grounding of an earlier day with the current life emphasis of the topical style? Is there any reason why a passage of Scripture cannot be treated with only such emphasis upon its historical setting as will illuminate its relevance for today? At any rate when a preacher occasionally does find a Bible incident or passage which illuminates our present situation, the people hear him gladly.

As to subject matter, Methodist preachers are being pulled in three directions. Some are busily working the newly discovered mines of psychology. Three of the eleven Pulpit sermons are derived from this source. On the one hand this represents a wholesome return to an emphasis upon what Christian faith can do for the individual, and should be encouraged. On the other hand, too often this approach results in a pseudo Christianity which substitutes self-hypnosis for the grace of God and makes personal happiness and success the goal of religion.

The Methodist Church has never been noted for producing great theologians, but along with the rest of Christendom its present preachers are trying to restate the great affirmations of Christian faith for their people. To be sure, there are not a few students in seminaries who see no practical use for theology and say they just want to help people. But many more realize that the deepest help people need today is an understanding of what kind of world this is and whether the signs of the times are meant for evil or for good. It is interesting that three of the eleven Pulpit sermons deal with doctrinal subjects.

Wesleyan Emphasis Again Needed

Traditionally, Methodist preachers have always been outspoken against social evil, and three of the eleven Pulpit sermons treat social and ethical themes. However, today in the church at large the social interpretation of Christianity represents a third area of tension. The oldtime "social gospelers" are not as sure as they once were that there is a simple solution to our human dilemma. Furthermore, the aggressive and continuous promotion of evangelism by church officials encourages the timorous in the naive hope that after all the chief business of the church is to save sinners who will then automatically correct social ills. In these three areas, then—psychological interpretation of religion, an adequate theology for today, and the social meaning of Christian faith—the Methodist pulpit gives forth an often uncertain and confusing sound.

Perhaps the resolution of these tensions and a new access of power in Methodist preaching awaits a return to the traditional Wesleyan emphasis upon Christian experience. This is an emphasis which even Wesley found it difficult to keep from fanatic excess, but nevertheless the

exuberant joy of a new life with God was the secret of the appeal and power of the Societies. A sound teaching that the Christian should expect to experience and enjoy God in every area of his life would provide the needed emphasis on personal religion and save evangelism from too vague and easy a generalization to "accept Christ and join the church." It would also give the fulcrum from which to apply Christian leverage to social problems. Further, it would harmonize with a sound theology which interprets God a present in history and actively moving for th redemption of men.

Let the preachers of Methodism continue thei devotion to the pulpit ministry. Let them main tain the fine variety of emphasis and interpre tation which is one of the glories of this freedom loving body. But let them re-examine their histori doctrine of Christian experience to find a basi for larger unity and new power.

The Crown of Life

By Ralph W. Sockman

THE DAY before last Palm Sunday a parade was held here in New York city which lasted over four hours and was viewed by more than a million persons. Measured by numbers and setting, that Saturday parade here in Manhattan dwarfed the Jerusalem proceedings which we call the Triumphal Entry. Yet it has already faded from memory, whereas the little procession of the first Palm Sunday will draw more millions of celebrants next year than last. Why?

It was not a large company which accompanied Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem and allowed his followers to hail him as king. No doubt a considerable crowd of spectators lined the street, for they were curious about the Galilean. And very likely many of these joined with Jesus' disciples in shouting, "Hosanna to the king who cometh in the name of the Lord," for they were looking for a Messiah to free them from Rome.

But the Pharisees, the social elite, held aloof, for they thought Jesus was undermining their historic faith. And the wealthy Sadducees, who catered to the Roman conquerors, were fearful lest Jesus should prove a disturber of the peace. And as for the Roman governor and his soldiers, they were probably sneering at the whole proceeding. What had Rome to fear from this unarmed ex-carpenter with his peasant followers? Measured by its immediate results, the spectacle of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem conveys pathos and arouses pity. The fickleness of the crowds, the fleeting acclaim of a few hours ending in a crown of thorns and a cross!

But the drama did not end. Turn from the gospels to the last book of the Bible. The writing of Revelation occurred several decades after the death of Jesus. Followers of the Nazarene had multiplied all around the Mediterranean area. Th Christians had become so numerous that the Ro man empire tried to make them scapegoats in orde to divert the popular attention from the govern mental corruption. They were persecuted and man were dying as martyrs. But the threat of deat could not kill their dreams. One of the Christians a refugee on the island of Patmos, wrote a descrip tion of his visions in the book we call "Revelation." And in the sixth chapter, he writes of the Chris as the rider of the white horse in that immorta company known as the "Four Horsemen of th Apocalypse." Of this Christ on the white horse the writer says: "And a crown was given unt him and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

I

How is it that the crown of thorns placed on th head of Jesus at Calvary was supplanted by victor's crown, and that the Black Friday of th crucifixion, the darkest day in human history, ha become known as Good Friday, and that the rathe pathetic little procession of the first Palm Sunda has come to be called the Triumphal Entry? Tha is the question I hold before you now. And th first answer I find is this: "In Jesus Christ we se the victorious manhood we all long for."

A friend recently wrote asking: "Why is it tha the Gospels never mention that Jesus smiled? Cer tainly he must have enjoyed humor and laughter. The writer's question serves to remind us hov many features of the Master's personality ar omitted from the record. No one tells us whethe he was tall or short, light or dark. You see, th Gospel writers were not primarily concerned t record for posterity the physical appearance o Jesus. They were trying to explain the reasons fo their continuing faith in him. The Gospel portrait are, therefore, impressionistic rather than photo graphic.

Nevertheless, we can be sure of many facts abou the historic Jesus. He was a man of the Jewis people, inheriting the traditions and outlook o his countrymen. He knew hunger, poverty an sorrow. We are told that his body grew weary an that once at least he grew faint. He felt the nee

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of prayer and fellowship. He was tempted in all points even as we are. His body was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Hence he felt pain as we feel it and in Gethsemane prayed that he might be spared the physical anguish of the cross.

Why do we remind ourselves of all these oft repeated facts? Because the perfect, sinless Jesus reported in the Gospels is so far above our achievements that it has been hard for some to believe that he was a real person living historically in Palestine. Hence there grew up a heresy that the person of Jesus was just an imaginary invention of the Gospel writers. It was to answer this false charge that the Apostles' Creed was formulated. And that is why the Apostles' Creed used so many words to stress the physical aspects of Jesus' life. Recall them: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried." The composers of the creed were emphasizing the fact that Jesus Christ was fully man.

It is because Jesus Christ was a man like unto ourselves, subject to "all the ills that flesh is heir to," that his triumph over sin and pain and death takes hold of our hearts. We need for our savior not one who merely tells us how we ought to feel and what we ought to be, but one who has actually lived and felt the victorious life for which we long.

Uncounted men have tried to describe Jesus, but no book about him has been completely satisfying. Artists have tried to paint him, but we feel no portrait has done him full justice. Millions have set out to follow him, but no one has ever fully succeeded. He is ever beyond us. His perfection baffles us. But we cannot give him up. His love will not let us go.

The words of Jesus, as they have been recorded for us, do not answer all the questions that men bring to him. Nor did he give solutions for all men's problems. He was not a lawyer. He was not an economist. He was not a scientist. But he showed us the spirit in which we ought to approach each particular situation and gave us principles which are applicable to every conceivable question. Jesus is the universal and eternal man.

A hymn written centuries ago by Bernard of Clairvaux voices our feelings as truly today as then:

> Jesus, thou Joy of loving hearts,
> Thou Fount of life, thou Light of men,
> From the best bliss that earth imparts
> We turn unfilled to thee again.

The crown of thorns was transformed into the crown of victory because in Jesus Christ we see the triumphant manhood for which we all long.

II

And now a second reason: In Christ we see the godhood which longs for our victorious manhood.

In all his ministry Jesus' main object was not to get men to love him but to get men to love God. He was ever seeking to turn attention from himself to God. He reminded his listeners that his teachings were not his own but God's, that his power of healing was not of himself but of God, that they were to think not of his goodness but of God's. Some years ago Dean Inge wrote: "Christ came to earth to reveal to us not that he was like God but that God was like himself."

And in revealing God's character, Christ gave a distinctively new note. The great Hebrew prophets had portrayed God as one God, just and holy, ruler of heaven and earth. The Old Testament had risen even to the idea of God as father, though his fatherhood was not very clearly stressed. But Jesus added a significant new feature in his interpretation of God's nature. And that new aspect, as the Jewish scholar Montefiore admits, is this: God takes the initiative in seeking his creatures before they seek him. Jesus pictures God not as a just and holy being waiting to be approached and appeased by his creatures, but as a divine shepherd going out to seek and to save the lost.

Now this Christian conception of God as a seeking God makes a mighty difference in our religious faith. It explains for one thing why Christianity, from the beginning, has been a missionary religion. I have great respect for Judaism and count many Jews among my friends, but I think they will admit that Judaism does not send missionaries out to unconverted peoples. In the Jewish view, God waits; in the Christian view, God seeks. The heavenly Father as Jesus revealed him is one who sends out into the highways and byways inviting men to his royal feast. Yes, he is a God who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus not only told men this truth, but he himself went to the cross in order to demonstrate how far God's love goes to win those whom he seeks. The death of Jesus was a sacrifice, but not in the sense of the Old Testament sacrifices, which were made in order to appease the anger and win the forgiveness of God. The death of Christ was the sacrifice God made to win the repentance and love of his erring children. Thus the cross is seen to be not a penalty paid to God but the price paid by God in giving the last full measure of devotion for his children.

The crucifixion of Jesus set men thinking more deeply than any other event in human history. And the most remarkable fact in the history of religious thought is that when the early Christians looked back and pondered on the dreadful agony of the cross, it made them think of the goodness of God rather than of his cruelty. Would it not have seemed natural for the followers of Jesus after beholding his death to say: "Well, that cross disproves the goodness of God. How can God be good when he allows the best man that ever lived to be so cruelly crucified?"

Such a conclusion would be natural if we think of Jesus simply as a brave good man battling

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against evil. But Jesus Christ was more than a man. As he said, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus Christ died not as a beaten man driven to the wall by enemies, but as the revealer of God demonstrating the depth of divine love. That is why Christians see in the cross not the cruelty of God but his goodness. Paul summed it up when he said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Yes, we see in Christ the godhood that longs for us to attain the victorious manhood we long for. And such is the godhood which can grip our minds and hearts. Browning expressed our feeling:

'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for!—my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it . . . it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

III

And now may we mention the third reason why the crown of thorns has been transformed into the crown of victory. Not only do we see in Jesus Christ the victorious manhood we all long for and the godhood which longs for us to attain victorious manhood, but also we find in Christ the power whereby we can achieve our longing to be like him. As Ireneaus, one of the church fathers, said, "He was made what we are that he might make us what he is."

How does Christ do this? Well, of course that is the heart of the whole gospel. And I can only here suggest one or two simple analogies.

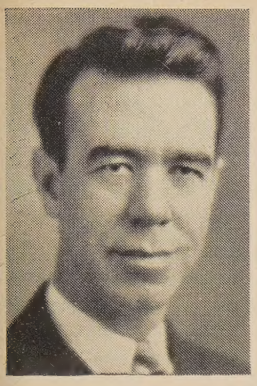
If I had before me here a tray on which were some steel filings, and if I were to hold above the tray at arm's length a steel magnet, the filings would feel the attraction, but so weakly that they would not be moved. Then if I were to hold the magnet nearer, pretty soon the pull of the attraction would begin to stir those filings a little. Then if the magnet came still nearer, the filings would leap up and cling to it. Similiary Jesus Christ brought the holy, just and transcendent God so near to our humanity that hearts and minds leaped to him and clung to him. And they still do.

When Christ makes us feel that God is not merely to be approached but is actually seeking us, he stirs a new confidence and expectancy in us. May I relate a boyhood experience which at least makes this truth vivid to myself. As a lad I rode a horse to high school in Fredericktown, Ohio. My horsemanship has never been very remarkable, and one night in the gathering dusk my horse took fright, suddenly whirled, threw me over his head, and dashed away. The road was deserted, the snow was deep, and the horse was gone. For a twelve-year-old boy it seemed a pretty dark moment; in fact it was even a tearful moment. But I had the sense to know that if I kept to the road toward home my father would eventually come out to seek me. So that is what I did and that is what he did. Father was concerned to know what was keepin his boy beyond the time of his expected retur It makes a great difference to a boy to have father who seeks.

Moreover, Christ makes us feel that our heav enly Father not only seeks us but has confidenc in us that we can follow him. My friend Dr. Harol Walker, who is a Presbyterian minister, tells o the time when he as a lad took part in a musica His teacher did what music teachers sometimes d —she gave a recital in which her pupils provide the program. Harold, being one of her pupils, wa assigned to play a piano selection called "Moon light on the Waters." I do not know whether a future Presbyterian ministers are required to pla "Moonlight on the Waters," but at any rate tha was Harold's assignment. When he sat down a the keyboard, his mind seemed to go blank and hi fingers to grow numb. He looked at his mother an several of his aunts who were present and the seemed on the verge of tears. He tells us that hi performance was sad indeed, and he retired fro the piano in what seemed to him utter disgrace But on his way home his father took hold of hi hand and said: "My boy, I know you can pla 'Moonlight on the Waters,' and if I know it an you know it, what difference does it make wha other people think?" Those words of his fathe lifted Harold's heart. It makes a mighty differenc to a boy to have a father who has faith in him.

And Christ not only reveals a heavenly Fathe who seeks us and who has faith in us, but also on who walks with us as our ever present partner There are those who keep so close to God that the feel God close to them. They feel him as the on who "walks beside them in the gloom, who share the burden wearisome, who all the dark way dot illume and bids us look beyond the tomb, the large life to live." The writer of the book of Revelatio not only sees the crown of victory given to Chris but he also sees the crown given to those wh faithfully follow Christ. Read: "And if ye b faithful ye will receive a crown of life."

Some twenty-five years ago as a young ministe I was preaching one Sunday at Smith College. remained over in the evening to attend a religiou forum in the city of Northampton, Massachusetts The speaker was Professor Kirtley Mather, dis tinguished geologist of Harvard and also a devou Baptist layman. Professor Mather was stating hi religious philosophy, and he did it very simply a great men usually do. He said that he believe there was a Divine Administrator presiding ove this universe and guaranteeing the triumph o personal and spiritual values. When he finishe and the forum was opened for questions, the firs question put to him was this: "How can you be lieve in a Divine Administrator governing thi universe when Jesus himself was so cruelly de feated?" I remember what Professor Mather did He looked his questioner straight in the eye an said: "In the light of what Jesus Christ said an did while he was on the earth and in the light o what has been done in his name, do you reall believe Jesus was defeated? I don't." Nor Do I.



By Gerald Kennedy

Wanted: Christian Gamblers

And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each man should take. Mark 15:24.

I WANT to speak in favor of gambling, and it is my hope that some of those listening to me may be encouraged to become gamblers. My thought springs from the scene of the crucifixion, so let us turn back to that tragic event in which Christianity finds the source of its power and the clue to its truth. You remember the scene. At the foot of the cross the soldiers wrangle over the clothes left by the man being killed. They are not very valuable and there are not many of them, for he was a poor man, but someone might as well have them. There is no point in cutting them up and dividing them. Why not gamble for them and thus provide some amusement and let somebody profit from the deal? So they cast lots for the garments of Jesus.

But in contrast to this cheap, heartless, tawdry scene, the strange man on the cross is making the heroic gamble. He is betting his life that love is stronger than hate, that life will conquer death, that God seeks and forgives. It will be too bad if we ever lose sight of the risk he took at Calvary, for the stakes were never higher and the daring courage shown never greater. When you think about men running risks for higher stakes, think of Jesus.

A Part of Human Nature

Let us begin by saying that gambling is a part of human nature—indeed, an inevitable part which can never be eliminated. This sounds to many people like a shocking thing for a minister to say, because gambling is associated with vice and racketeers. It has come to mean an ignoble attempt to get something for nothing and a preying on the weakness of human nature. It means broken homes and ruined lives. That, of course, is precisely what it does mean when this human tendency is directed toward cheap goals. America is indulging in this vice more than it ever has in all its history, and Americans are spending about $30 billion a year in this activity. It is estimated that 45 per cent of the adult population participates in this racket. There will be increased pressure upon us to legalize gambling as taxes get higher, for many people will see an easy way to pay national bills without recognizing that in this direction lie national corruption and moral debacle. There are tremendous profits in degrading people and in corrupting governments, and in these rotten endeavors the gambler is always a key figure. Those soldiers at the foot of the cross symbolize an ancient human sickness and the perversion of a human impulse.

But this is a perversion, for the greatness of humanity lies in its irresistible impulse to risk something for unprovable goals. Every great achievement was made possible by men who dared to commit their lives and fortunes to an enterprise they thought worthy to have a legitimate claim on their final devotion. Think of all the lonely men who have stood against the mob, risking their lives for the sake of righteousness and the future. If you want a real picture of gambling, look at the man on the cross and not at the poor fellows beneath it.

Studdert-Kennedy understood this as well as any man, and he wrote:

> How do I know that God is good? I don't.
> I gamble like a man. I bet my life
> Upon one side in life's great war. I must,
> I can't stand out. I must take sides. The man
> Who is neutral in this fight is not
> A man. He's bulk and body without breath,
> Cold leg of lamb without mint sauce. A fool.
> He makes me sick. Good Lord! Weak tea!
> Cold slops!*

A Part of God's Nature

If it is shocking for Christians to hear that man is a born gambler, how much more shocking to hear a minister say that God is a gambler too! You can hardly escape this conclusion, however, if you choose the God of the Bible over against the God of philosophy. The philosopher prefers to believe that God is a cold principle, objective, mechanical and without personality or emotion. T. H. Huxley portrays the human relationship with such a God as a chess game, in which our invisible opponent is fair and just, but never overlooks a mistake. The one who plays well is rewarded but "one who plays ill is checkmated without haste, but without remorse."

**The Best of Studdert-Kennedy* (Harper, 1948), p. 147.

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There are some Christians who seem to prefer this concept of God over the biblical interpretation. They picture the Atonement as if it were a cold, legal deal, worked out by an unmerciful judge. They seem to believe that God is caught in his own laws and so he must insist on the best man who ever lived dying in agony to satisfy his demands. Let us make what may seem a foolish suggestion. We ought to begin all our thinking about God by assuming that he is at least as good as we are. Such a simple assumption would help us escape much unchristian theology. I would not keep any man, even Hitler, in endless torment, no matter what he had done. I think he ought to have a taste of the suffering he meted out to others, but to roast eternally, as Jonathan Edwards intimated would be the fate of sinners, is certainly overdoing it. I would never send unbaptized babies to hell, but there are theologians who insist, even today, that God does it. This is to make God more vindictive than men and utterly unworthy of our worship. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ does not fit such a pattern.

There are Christians who think history is a closed system, foreordained, predestined, with no room left in it for freedom. So they draw their charts showing that the end of the world is coming this year or next, and proving that some contemporary man or nation or institution is the anti-Christ. Once again, the God of the Bible, who is Lord of history, is not like that. He breaks into the human situation in marvelous new ways and he leaves the door open always for the generation and the man who will repent. God has made history an open door, and freedom is an essential part of its structure.

God Makes High Ventures

Once you take a mechanical viewpoint, then you are ready to insist, as a popular evangelist did, that we will eat on transparent gold plates in heaven, and there will be no labor unions there. It could be that this man has a source of information not available to the rest of us, but probably such a naive picture of heaven is an inevitable result of an unintelligent, inadequate and in many ways unchristian theology. Such people have taken God's freedom from him and have failed to comprehend that he too, being free, makes high ventures.

You do not find the Bible speaking of God as Superman, but you hear it speaking of a Father strong enough to become weak, good enough to share our sorrow, and loving enough to descend to our suffering. You see God daring to grant men liberty that they may become creatures in his image, capable of hearing his voice and speaking with him. He knew that such a venture would mean that men could become more evil than the beasts, but he risks even that for the sake of creating free persons and great souls. His universe is not a machine, it is a dream, and whenever we call him Father we are confessing our faith in our God's willingness to run grave risks.

Martin Luther talked so much about the clergy marrying that he was finally forced to practice what he preached. He married a nun, Katherine von Bora, and although it was no love match they were happy together. When a daughter arrived Luther wrote to a prospective godmother: "Dear lady, God has produced from me and my wife Katie a little heathen. We hope you will be willing to become her spiritual mother and help make her a Christian."* And God is like that. He takes us as we are—hesitating between the mud and the stars—and, like a father, he gambles on his children by giving them freedom.

A Part of Faith

The cry of our day is for security, and we are overdoing it. Let it be made clear at once that this does not mean we should go back to a time when a poor man was at the mercy of the rich and the powerful. That is what too many people mean when they cricitize security. But when a nation grown wealthy makes its foreign policy a desperate attempt to hold on to what it has, it is growing senile. When a society barters justice for stability, it is already on the decline. Someone said that an insurance salesman is a fine servant of society, but it is tragic if he becomes the symbol of society. The most insecure people in the world are the ones depending on some legality to hold their jobs. The only real security is of the spirit.

Now this brings us to the necessity of faith if we are to live with any dignity or meaning, and faith implies risk. No man can live ten minutes on the basis of what he can prove. The many dangers which face any man going home from church can be emphasized until we conclude that it is hazardous to start toward the door. We might slip on the stairs, a car might hit us, an earthquake might topple a wall on us, or a bomb might explode as we go by. But most of us assume we will get home and usually we do. Business lives on credit, which is to say, business lives on faith; and if American business had to operate on a cash basis it would be crippled. Every businessman has to risk continually, and no man can play a part in this most practical, hardheaded activity without being a man of faith.

Science Needs Faith

Science lives on faith. We have talked much nonsense in our day about science's dealing only with what can be proved. Every scientific theory is a leap of faith, a gamble, and the so-called laws of science are generalities based on a certain number of experiments and hardly ever final. When it comes to the ultimate nature of the universe science, like everything else, has to move out beyond the facts.

Consider the men who are the great heroes of the Bible. They are not always morally perfect, for even the greatest of them were guilty of moral breaks and disgusting sins. They were not the safe, respectable men who valued security above all else. They were the men of faith, the gamblers for high stakes—justice, mercy, righteousness.

*Bainton: *Here I Stand* (Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950), p. 293.

They would hazard the loss of their lives for God's sake, and the greatest of them all was the Galilean who dared to believe that his death would be redemptive.

Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," a document looked upon with some suspicion by the professional patriots of our day, says:

> I saw that if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not feel for a moment confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. . . . As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body. . . . I saw that the state was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it and pitied it.

So much of the craven fear of our time is slavery. How terrible is the need of our civilization for the great men of faith who will take the risk of obeying God rather than men. And I believe with all my heart that our civilization cannot be saved without men who will risk their lives for the preservation of personal and spiritual freedom. In this shabby period, God send us men of faith, which is to say, gamblers for the human spirit.

Gamblers for Christ

The world was never in greater need of men who will gamble for Christ and his Kingdom. In a day when we suffer a pathological fear not only of our enemies but of our own brethren if they are slightly nonconformist, we are in desperate need of confidence. In this crucial time when we seem to distrust the democratic way and foolishly put our trust in military might, we need encouragement to risk something for God.

Christians ought to be willing to gamble for brotherhood, and theoretically we are. We have no difficulty in loving humanity, but it is often beyond us to love individuals. The idea that prejudice and hatred arise only out of ignorance is nonsense. They arise out of our irritations with people who live too close to us. Dostoievsky confessed that within twenty-fours he began to hate the best of men. Brotherhood is a risky thing to believe in if you really expect to begin practicing it on your neighbor. We can believe in it in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but when a civil rights bill is put before the voters to make discrimination unlawful in a particular city, we are not so sure about it.

Across the world and in our own nation men are rising up and demanding equality of opportunity. The safe and secure way to deal with this movement, according to the champions of the *status quo*, is to crush it if we can. In the Orient our policy sometimes seems to be to support any reactionary regime which screams loudly that it is against communism. What would happen if America should say, "We were born in a revolution, too, and we are on the side of all who hunger and thirst for a more adequate life. Let us give you a hand. We are gambling on the kind of world where all men are regarded as brothers"? Would this not be the real sentiment of a Christian people, and isn't it worth risking all it will cost?

Paul Geren, in his *Burma Diary*, tells about the American ambulance driver who was coming out of Burma heavily loaded with men. When the procession was halted, some wounded Chinese soldiers climbed all over the vehicle because it was their one and only chance to get away before the Japanese arrived. But the order had been given that no others could be taken and the driver got out and pushed the wounded men off the ambulance. Later he decided to go back to China, because, as he said after relating this experience, "I owe the Chinese a debt." Perhaps we owe all men a debt, and in taking the risks involved in paying that debt we might find our souls again.

Gamblers for Truth

We ought to be gamblers for truth. Dr. Samuel Johnson would never allow his servant to say he was out just because he did not want to be disturbed. He told Boswell that, while a philosopher might be able to distinguish this from lying, he did not want to damage his servant's sense of the truth. Not many of us go that far. Dr. Wallace Hamilton said that a recent book full of lies was excused on the ground that it was lying in a good cause. Too much of our propaganda is spoken with the same excuse. We cannot get back to any firm foundation for our social life until we are willing to bet that truth is the only way. What a difference it would make in our legal affairs, for example, if every lawyer should assume, as Gandhi did, that his duty is not to prove the guilty innocent but to help the court arrive at the truth.

How truthful and honest was Jesus! He never once appealed to the lower part of man's nature and he never presented his case on the basis of an unworthy motive. When he called his disciples, he told them the truth about the hardships and the dangers. Yet he believed in men and bet his life on their hunger for goodness which would be decisive soon or late. Tempted to lose faith in men, I turn back to Jesus and find that faith restored. But even more wonderful than that, when I lose faith in myself he looks at me with understanding eyes and, in spite of knowing all about my betrayals, I know he still believes in me. Perhaps this is his greatest miracle. Are we willing to take our place by his side and look at men through his eyes? Perhaps if we would gamble on truth, as he did, we too could be redeemed by his faith in us and in all men.

Wanted: Christian Gamblers

Wanted: Christian Gamblers who will not sit by the campfire but will push out into the social underbrush where it is dangerous to go and where a man has to risk his life. Wanted: Christian Gamblers who will scorn taking cheap chances for the flashy, impermanent rewards of the world and will bet their lives on God and his purposes. Wanted: Christians who will gamble that Jesus is right and has a claim to their complete allegiance.

By Albert Edward Day

The Fellowship of Discovery

Where two or three are gathered together in My name, There am I in the midst. Matthew 18:20.

ONE of the surest roads to God is an intimate spiritual fellowship. Anyone can talk religion anywhere—if he has it. We ought to talk it more than we do. It is such an exciting subject for conversation. What could be more thrilling than God? What more fascinating than the character and career of Jesus? What more everlastingly new than the experience of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the communion of the Holy Spirit? If ever a mind should be confident and a heart aglow and a tongue nimble, it is when these are topics of conversation.

But it is still true that the best talk about religion is not just anywhere. Rather is it when two or three of the right sort confront each other. Then conversation is the road into the very Presence. Then can the wisdom of the human heart become the revelation of the Heart Eternal. We need solitude, but we also need other souls. We need the fellowship of the worshiping congregation, but we also need intimate conversation. We need the sacrament of bread and wine, but also the sacrament of congenial brotherhood and sisterhood. We need books, but we also need to be permitted to read the stories "written on the fleshly tables of the heart." Solitude and service and sacrament and study are all the more likely to be ways to discover God if we have fellow pilgrims to whom we can return ever and anon for correction and confirmation of our discoveries, and for suggestion and guidance as to further discoveries.

One great American, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a bit shy of such relationships. He wrote once:

> Though I prize my friends, I cannot afford to talk with them and study their visions, lest I lose my own. It would indeed give a certain household joy to quit this lofty seeking and come down into warm sympathies with you, but then I know well I shall mourn always the vanishing of my Mighty Gods.

Emerson was both right and wrong. He was right in his fears of mere chatter; wrong in his renunciation of intimate comradeship. He had some great opportunities. Not far away were Thoreau and Channing and Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller. With them he did engage in many a tournament of words. But if he never passed through the arena of group discussion to a comradely quest with kindred souls, he missed something that all his Olympian solitude and his lofty seeking could not give him.

The great spiritual discoveries are seldom the achievements of the solitary. It is the sparks struck off between confiding souls that light the torch of discovery. It is the suggestions flung out on the current of swiftly flowing, carefree conversation that ripen into faith; and faith, when it is mature, bringeth God into conscious experience. It is the honest criticism of those we trust that shatters illusions and turns the face once again in the direction of reality. It is the challenge of victories which an intimate confidant shares with us that gives us courage to go out and win victories for ourselves.

Fellowship with One

Review your own life. Is it not true that the great moments have been those when you realized that someone had unlocked the door and admitted you to thoughts, feelings, aspirations, experiences, which you never dreamed were there and to which the world was a stranger? Recall the influences which molded your life, the inspirations which launched you on great adventures, the forces which have created confidence in yourself and hope for the future, the awakenings from the lethargy of self-content, the renaissance of determination to stand up and be counted in the contest between good and evil—have these not come when some person of insight and devotion opened his mind and heart to you?

I waited twenty-five years until a truly brilliant mind held out its arms and took me into the circle of a stimulating intellectual comradeship. I had had the normal experience of youth: love in the home, teachers in school, chums on the college campus. But one day came this man, whose clarity of thought and gifts of expression and genuineness of character made him at once my admiration and my awe. I never thought I could get near him. I was a shy, diffident young preacher, sure that I was called to preach but wondering if God for once had not made a mistake. Then that great,

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splendid man came into my home, rode the circuit with me in my rattling old buggy, conversed with me as if he expected me to tell him something worth knowing and remembering, and proceeded little by little to share with me what he had learned and hoped and feared and loved through the years. It was my third birth. I was born first when my mother looked into my face and said, "My boy." I was born the second time when God looked in on my penitence and said, "My son." I was born the third time when Christian Havighurst sat down beside my halting ministry and said, "My brother." I tremble to think how many more years I might have stumbled along in timidity and uncertainty had it not been that a man came who found in me, as I did in him, something which bound us together but which, at the same time, gave me my first real freedom.

An Inspiring Friend

Many more years passed by and one day Carl Wallace Petty came into my life. Our minds were grappling with the same problems. His brilliance at first dazzled and frightened me. He had an encyclopedic mind but also one that was as creative as the dawn. Wherever he appeared there was light on the landscape, birds of joy began to sing, flowers of hope unfolded their petals, exciting commerce began to throng the highways of thought. I felt like a tyro in his presence. He knew so much more than I about so many more things, and he could say it so grandly. But his grace took me in. New iron come into my soul; new stars twinkled in my sky; new horizons opened before my eyes; new continents beckoned.

I have ventured this frank confession in order to encourage you to recollection. You know what you are today. You know what you were ten, twenty, thirty years ago. Note the difference—the surer thought, the clearer conviction, the greater facility of word and deed. Trace those differences to their beginning. Isn't it true that some individual is responsible? Somewhere you escaped isolation for a while, passed beyond the formalities or even conventionalities of group relationships, and found a soul. Someone ceased being a stranger and became a friend. Then the friend became a confidant. One day you suddenly became aware that you were saying things you had never said to anyone else. You were talking profoundly about themes that hitherto you had touched only lightly. You were confessing struggles which no one ever guessed. You were taking someone into your inner sanctuary. Something happened to both of you. Life has never been quite the same since. When you found someone — their reality — you found yourself—your reality.

Fellowship with an Intimate Group

No, Mr. Emerson, when you talk with another about his visions, you do not lose your own; you intensify and multiply them. When you come down out of your icy though splendid isolation into warm sympathy, you do not mourn the vanishing of your "mighty gods"; instead, you rejoice in the discovery of the true God who vanisheth never.

If you want to find God, find some man or woman to whom God is real and who is as anxious as you are to know more about the Divine Reality.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name." A variant is suggested here. A creative fellowship may exist not only between two but within an intimate group. One of the most significant movements of our time is the prayer-cell movement. There, a few congenial people with a hunger for God come together, not to have a meeting, thank God, but to meet each other and God. They come once a week or once a month, as the situation makes possible. As informally as if gathered about a dinner table or seated before an open fire, they fall to talking. They become acquainted. They get used to each other. They read a book about God or prayer or personal problems. They begin to discuss it. Little by little they come to share their own problems and needs and hungers and discoveries and insights. Nobody has to make a speech or offer an audible prayer. There are no embarrassments and no exhibitions. But they find themselves coming closer to each other and to God. Their difficulties are cleared away. Their faith deepens. The fellowship becomes creative.

The creativity of this kind of fellowship has its reason in our very nature.

The Discovery of Self

Our problem is first of all with ourselves. It is not merely that God is a stranger to us, but we are strangers to ourselves. Katherine Mansfield in one of her stirring but pathetic letters wrote to a friend, "I do not know which is the ill me and which is the well me." Do any of us know ourselves any better? We are one thing at one time and another at another time. Which is the real "me"? We cannot tell. Is it the doubting me or the believing me? The one that seems on the verge of discovering God or the other that scoffs at the very idea that anybody can know God? The one that has a passion for eternity or the other that is quite content with the glittering baubles of earth? Many times, if we speak the truth, we would have to confess, "I do not know which is the well me and which the ill."

Until we do know, we cannot hope to find God, for God is found not by the doubting self but by the believing self; not by the dull self but by the sensitive self; not by the courtesan of time but by the lover of eternity. We must know the real self and commit ourselves to it, ere we can know the God whose partial image the real self is.

We are not likely to identify that real self alone. In isolation one self seems as valid as the other. It is when we share with somebody who has proved his real self and its validities, that we begin to trust our real self and value its validities.

That is true everywhere. We know ourselves rational, because for the most part we keep company with the rational selves of rational people. If we never lived except in isolation or in company with the insane, we should not know whether we were insane or they. Sanity identifies and con-

firms sanity. Likewise if we never lived except in isolation or among the irreligious, we should not be able to reach a sound religious judgment. We should not know whether our efforts at religion or our denials of religion were insane. Our religious impulses would be suspect. Our moments of faith would be discounted.

There are in all of us possibilities of religion and irreligion, of belief and skepticism, of God-consciousness and earth-consciousness. Which of these we fulfill and enthrone will be determined pretty largely by our associates and especially by the ones whom we take into the intimacies of life. If they be persons who live by faith, then the God-questing, God-sensitive, God-trusting elements in us will be confirmed, accentuated, brought into play. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote to his beloved Sophia, "Thou only hast taught me that I have a heart; thou only hast thrown the light downward and upward into my soul." Many a man has never discovered his own soul until a comrade unveiled it to him and said, "This is the real you, not that—this religious you that once in a while seems to feel a Presence."

The Discovery of God

Our problem, in the second place, is not self only but self's experience. Experiences of God we all have. We cannot escape him. He is in the growing flower and the growing mind, in the shining sun and the shining idea, in the continuities that link our bodies with nature and ourselves with society, in enlarging social ideals which find expression in law and custom and in the intensely private ideals which bring us before the bar of our own conscience, in the loves which bind us to each other and the loves which are a yearning for him. Every man has experiences of God whether he recognizes them or not.

The assurance of God comes when a man learns to identify what is God in all this experience. Accumulated identifications quicken recognition. Recognition clears the way for fellowship. Our frequent failure is that we do not recognize God even when we have an experience of him. In that wonderful Irish play "The Traveling Man," a woman who once had been helped by Jesus, the "traveling man," and who was warned to be on the lookout for his return, fails to see him in the bespattered tramp at her door. After he has gone away, recognition dawns on her and she wails, "He is come and I never knew him. He is king of the world." So often God comes to us and we do not know him, and so we miss the glow of conscious fellowship.

Here, again, two or three are better than one. Most of us need help in such identification of God. We cannot ourselves be sure always, and we cannot talk about such things to just anybody, even though they be good people. Those first timid awarenesses of God, this stir of the emotions, that impression which seems to be divine and makes us wonder if we dare say "This, this is God," those smitings of conscience, these summons to loftier levels of conduct—we cannot speak of such things to ordinary friends. Yet we need to speak of them to somebody, for they are clues to God. We need to have such clues confirmed and be helped in following them. How grateful beyond all words is one man to those rare souls here and there to whom he could open his life and who have said to him as they have listened, "Man, this is God moving in upon you. This urgency, that compunction, all were God. Keep them. Live by them." Without their help he would have missed God. God would have come and gone and he would not have recognized him. He would still be groping where now he is sure, lonely where now he is not alone, defeated where now by God's grace he is victor. Because he had intimate friends, he now has the Friend.

The Clarification of Religion

Finally, our problem is with religion itself. You will not misunderstand me when I say that it is often religion which gets between us and God—conventional religion, traditional religion, false religion. I can perhaps briefly say it best with a story. One night in one of my parishes my telephone rang. In answer to its summons I hurried to the home of a man of wealth and intelligence and character. He was in turmoil, not over money or sin or politics, but over religion. Because he could no longer believe that the world was created in six days or that a serpent talked to Eve or that a flood once covered the whole earth, and because traditional religion had taught him that belief in God meant belief in all that, he was in a blue funk. He did not want to lose God, but he could not repudiate his intelligence. He was in despair. You should have seen the lines in his face clear, and felt the very atmosphere of the home change, when it was pointed out to him that God and such interpretations of history were not inseparable, that he could forget the history and still have God. The difficulty was not with God or with the man's intellectual outlook, but with a traditional religion which had thrust its interpretation between him and God.

In every alert and growing life there are things which cannot be fitted into familiar religious patterns. Escape from the tyranny of the patterns is a necessity for a conscious experience of God. Probably every one of us has had trouble with patterns of this type, and every one of us needs a confidant whose shared experience will help us to discard the pattern and discover the God who is outside the pattern. If you want to find God, do find two or three with whom you may gather in the name of Christ.

I know how difficult that is for some of you. I am diffident and shy, too. I still find it hard to communicate my deepest self. I am inclined to share the feeling of the man who was asked what his religion was and replied, "Madam, that is something which every sensible man keeps to himself." I tried to live within myself and found myself inadequate. Again and again it has been where two or three have gathered in Christ's name that I have found him anew. So start out, won't you?

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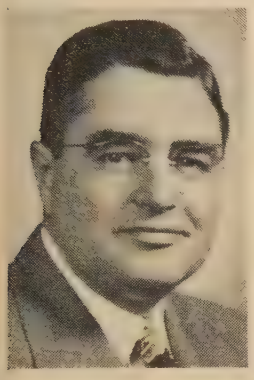
Does God Really Love Us?

By Russell J. Humbert

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16.

SOME YEARS AGO we saw a popular screen play entitled "The Man who Played God," which depicted a beneficent man working on a round-the-clock schedule helping other people. My main memory of that drama is that it is a good thing to get God's slant on our world by trying to see it as God must see it. It is impossible for us to see life through God's eyes, yet it is well to attempt at least a partial perspective of the Divine. As we leave this rather fantastic idea, we do have the right to ask, Does God really love us? Or to make the question more personal, How much is God interested in me as an individual?



Let us say flatly and immediately that God cares more for us and his world than we can appreciate. This is evidenced by the facts of the Christian gospel and the faith reproduced in the lives of those who have been changed by this good news. The age-worn statement of John goes to the heart of the matter: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Here in the small compass of a few words we see why mankind needs a gospel, why God literally sends that gospel, how God looks at us, and finally, and most important, what God intends to do about his world. Let us now look at our world with this divine perspective.

Perishing World

Ours is a perishing or disintegrating world. I do not mean to give in to permanent pessimism, nor to adopt the view of history which sees our world as a clock about to run down; I simply want to see the resident forces which can and may lead to our destruction. There is a pertinent story told about the classic tale of Rip Van Winkle, to the effect that when he left the inn to take his extended nap in the woods, a picture of King George III hung over the fireplace. When he came back, some twenty years later, the picture of George Washington hung there. He had slept through the Revolution! Might it be possible that Rip's posterity is now sleeping calmly through a revolution?

Willful ignorance keeps many people from the best that God offers, and because of this we live in a perishing world. We live in the midst of abundance, and this plenty binds us to the best. Strange, isn't it? that we are free moral agents, with the power to choose, and we choose so poorly. One of our great lay leaders from England, C. S. Lewis, sees this clearly. He says:

> We are halfhearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased.

We need to hear the prophetic warning of Hosea, who said in a day similar to ours: "My people are destroyed for a want of knowledge. . . . Since you have forgotten the law of God, I likewise will forget your children."

Independence an Anaesthetic

Wanton independence acts as a sort of anaesthetic which keeps us from feeling our spiritual need. This is a strange situation. Here we are surrounded by more things and more people than any previous generation; yet in spite of these potential helps we become more and more dependent upon a welfare state. Then, to add to the confusion, we become more selfish and independent in the midst of our dependence. One keen modern paints this world picture of man's present condition:

> He lives in a crowd; caucus has replaced friendship. . . . There is a crowd of busybodies, self-appointed masters of ceremonies, whose life is devoted to destroying solitude wherever solitude should exist. . . . We live, in fact, in a world starved for solitude, silence and privacy: and therefore starved for meditation and true friendship.

In our gross independence we have become free from everything, free even from seeing God's provision for our spiritual need. Paul could well say to us as he did to the church at Corinth, "Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block."

God sees a perishing world—perishing not be-

cause of man's inventive genius but because of man's preoccupation with the lesser.

Dangerous World

Ours is a dangerous world. Power of any kind, undirected, is dangerous. This is a power-conscious age; yet we have not gained adequate control of that which we are able to produce. Just this week a very bright young man told me he was choosing one of the social sciences as a lifework, instead of one of the physical sciences, because he felt the lag in our ability to control.

We live in a dangerous world owing to man's disobedience to known laws. These laws are quite largely moral and social; nevertheless they are laws. Read your daily paper and see the flaunting of common decency by people in places of responsibility, and you will grasp immediately what I mean. Paul painted a prophetic picture of our day when he said: "But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self . . . holding the form of religion but denying the power of it."

This danger is universal, it is not limited to any one person or class. We might well say, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Our lack of moral insight causes us to rush here and there for entertainment and excitement. We see all about us signs of sadness and badges of boredom. Elton Trueblood has written another good book—*Signs of Hope*. In it he says:

> One does not need to be a philosopher to realize that there can be bitterness in air-conditioned houses. Even the unreflective must notice that trivialities are just as trivial when they are transmitted by the wonders of television. . . . We have less reason to be frightened of flood and drought and ocean waves, but we have more reason to be frightened of our fellow men, and the fury of the elements is as nothing when compared with the fury of angry or fanatical men.

God sees a dangerous world because men choose to defy the very laws which were designed to defend him.

Important World

Ours is an important world. We need go no farther than the words of our text to see this fact. "For God so loved the world . . ." Truly God loves this world. In the beginning God looked at his creation and "it was good." Because of man's abuse, God had to step in and cleanse it; hence the story of Noah and the flood, and the many subsequent warnings of the prophets. God's one grand invasion came however in the personification of his Spirit through his Son, Jesus. In Jesus the people in his day saw, and we now in spirit realize, the warm and tender interest God has in each of us. The church must recapture this message if the world is to come to its senses. Georgia Harkness, one of the great spiritual leaders of our day, says in her recent book, *The Gospel and Our World:*

> We may rejoice that the pendulum is swinging back from the extremer forms of liberalism, and that the emphasis on the saving act of God in Christ and forgiveness of sin through the divine mercy is again theological doctrine in good standing. If we neglect this note in our churches, as we too often have, we lose the heart of the gospel.

This world is important to us. We live here. This is our life and here and now begins life eternal. It is not only good sense, it is good religion to make the most of life. Here again the words of our text apply: "Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The most important decisions to be made by any of us are those which set the pace for all of life. Like the Prodigal Son of old, may we come to our senses and return to our Father's house. God does love us and will say of us today as we return, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

A Pastoral Prayer

By Warren A. Nyberg

Minister, Emmanuel Methodist Church
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ETERNAL GOD, thou art the Lord of all creation. Everything we have of material wealth or of individual talent is thine. Thine also is the brooding power for good we feel in our hearts, directing us away from whatsoever is foolish and in the direction of what makes for the highest happiness.

Save us, we pray, from selfish use of our blessings. Direct us anew into thy divine path where we may receive a vision of life consecrated back to thee.

We stand in need of thy self-giving love more than anything else in the world. Without it we are as strangers in a foreign land. With it, our Father, we are in the homeland of the soul. We thirst no more. Our cup runneth over and the goodness and mercy follow us all our days. Take not thy love from us; conquer our selfishness; open human need to our eyes to which until now we have been blind.

Let the blessing of thy presence rest with all who are discouraged and depressed and who in their bitterness turn unto thee. Upon those who are anxious about loved ones—at war, in hospitals, wherever they may be—send thy comforting assurance. We do not ask to be saved from the trials of life, whatever they may be for each of us. We do pray for divine power to triumph over those trials, confident that if we seek we shall find, and that with thee there is divine wisdom able to save to the uttermost.

Let thy guiding hand be upon all here this morning who are making important decisions—life work, a battle with temptation, areas where the right is not clearly discerned. Uphold them with thy counsel; empower them with thy Spirit; lead them in the way everlasting.

We continually pray for world peace. May there come speedily in all the lands such repentance and turning to thee that the method of war shall be abolished; that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If I Should Die Before I Live

By John Branscomb

But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God. John 1:12.

WHEN I was a little tyke I was one of those fortunate children who had a mother who believed in teaching her children to kneel down beside her and say their prayers. I used to do that as a child. Interestingly enough, I still do. Can you imagine the prayer I used to say? Yes, that's the one—"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake . . . If I should die before I wake . . . If I should die before I wake . . ." (Those words startled me.) And then, "I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take. And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Some time ago I had a dream that brought me to wakefulness with cold sweat on my brow. I dreamed that I had died before I lived. In the light of that dream I remembered the words of a brokenhearted father who came out of the hospital ward and said to me, "My baby was born dead. The poor little tyke, he had to die before he lived." That's one of the saddest thoughts imaginable. It is doubly tragic in that it is enacted all about us. Lots of people die before they live. They exist, eating, drinking, making merry, but so far as life is concerned, they are dead. Dr. Halford Luccock tells of finding in a biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne a marginal notation from one of the great writer's notebooks. It read, "Suggestion for a story: a story in which the main character never puts in his appearance." Hawthorne never wrote that story, but it has been written again and again in the existence of people whose bodies are stages on which the main character never appears.

A song that is a favorite of many contains these words: "I love life, I want to live, to drink of life's fullness, take all it will give you." One of the first requisites of living before you die is to be in love with life, magnificently obsessed by it. Resources for abundantly living in our world are available, if we will only reach out and appropriate them. It is the purpose of our Creator that we all shall have life. If there is any word in the Bible that might be elected as the theme of the Book, it is the word LIFE, spelled in caps. A basic document of our nation declares that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" are the inalienable right of all men. The Master of life said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Likewise he declared, "I am come that you may have life." But alas! He who spoke those words was dead at thirty-three—dead almost before he lived.

But I wonder. From him more life has poured into the world than from any other source. He is the essence of life, the embodiment of life, the source of life, and he desires to share the abundant life with all men. John says in his Gospel, "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." What a statement! The power to become—that should be the obsession of every living man. The first line in one of the finest books of our day says, "The central business of every human being is to be a real person." That's the central theme of this sermon—to challenge us to live before we die, to become the sons and daughters of God.

Realizing Selfhood

What a tragedy for a man to die before he realizes his selfhood! God intends for everybody to be somebody. Without being overly proud one can realize that he has value in the sight of God and believe that he counts. A good friend of mine who superintends a children's home told of a group of the children discussing their background and parentage, the folk to whom they originally belonged. Finally one little fellow standing at the edge of the crowd said, "Shucks, I ain't nobody's nothin'." Hear the words of John, my boy: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." Every lad is a potential child of God. Thomas Arnold, the famous and beloved headmaster of Rugby, used to doff his hat to all his students who passed by, and when asked why replied, "You never can tell when you are passing a future prime minister of England." Dr. Fosdick tells of an old music teacher frantically climbing the stairs of a burning dormitory which had been set afire by the shells from the guns of Napoleon's army marching on Vienna, crying as he hurried, "Franz, Franz, where are you, my child?" At last he found the little Franz Schubert hiding in fear under a bed and rushed him to safety. Save a child. Lead him to know the Master of life. Teach him how to live before he dies. There are acres of diamonds hidden in the lives of all God's children.

JOHN BRANSCOMB is pastor of First Methodist Church, Orlando, Fla. His church was selected as one of the great churches of America in last year's Christian Century *poll of 100,000 Protestant ministers. He is an outstanding leader in carrying out all phases of his denomination's program in Methodism's Southeastern Jurisdiction.*

It is the chief business of every one of us to become a real person, to achieve selfhood. Each one of us is a unique person, made differently, fashioned after a peculiar pattern, and the Creator has a unique function for each of us in his plan. Let him who thinks that there is no opportunity to become a distinctive person in the world except he drink the right kind of liquor, check with the bureau of identification in Washington, and he will discover that the FBI has millions of sets of fingerprints filed there and no two sets have ever been found to be identical. Even down to the tips of your fingers God has made you different from any other individual, and you may be assured that he had a unique service for you to render in life. Nobody else can do the work God has mapped out for you.

Soren Kirkegaard's story of the wild duck that had flown through the trackless ways of the skies but settled down in a barnyard and became satisfied to grow fat and lazy as he allowed someone else to provide for him, suggests to us the tragedy of one who could become a tall son of God acquiescing in the mediocrity of the barnyard. Back in college days we used to predict who of our classmates was most likely to succeed in life and really make a go of it. Looking back now upon some of the brightest and most promising of the students, we discover they just haven't made the grade, they had died before they really lived. But there was one fellow in particular who came through. Everybody said he would. Keen-minded, alert, attractive, aggressive, friendly, he had everything. He was a natural. I had lost track of him until recently. I picked up a copy of *World Outlook* and read a story by that fellow and discovered that he has become a high and useful servant of one of the most influential news services in the world. It's a great inspiration to see a person make a good start, give evidence of ultimate victory, and then observe him realize selfhood and attain unto the high objectives toward which he moved in other years. To live before you die means you must develop the art of realizing selfhood.

Developing a Sense of Destiny

A man can live before he dies if he develops a sense of destiny. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." All men need to know the way, to have a road to follow. Stanley Jones has magnified Jesus as the way. His first and most revolutionary book was entitled *The Christ of the Indian Road.* As this great missionary evangelist has traversed the highways and the skyways and the sealanes of the earth, his testimony is that he has found Jesus on every road, and in all places the result is the same: when men walk in the road with Him they have a sense of mission, a sense of destiny. Hear his words: "If ye continue in my word, then ye shall be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There you have it—a sense of destiny. Continue in me and in my word, abide in me. Christ knows where he is going and he challenges us to walk in the way with him.

Albert Schweitzer sat at his desk in France at the close of day reading a tract on the French mission in Africa. First he cast it in the wastebasket then retrieved it and read on. He was obsessed. He soliloquized, "My search is over. At last I have found a job that's big enough." Subsequently he became one of the greatest missionary leaders in the history of the world enterprise of the Christian church. He made a date with destiny and nothing has swayed him from his course. Among our churches and colleges across the nation there are innumerable young people who are potential Schweitzers and Grenfells and Stanley Joneses, ready to take the road with him who is the way and move forward toward the realization of a Christian destiny. A man cannot be a real person until he has developed a sense of destiny and laid his hands on the plow with Him who steadfastly set his face toward Jerusalem "and went." The way will open when we live and companion with him who is the way.

Our Chief Desire

As we love Christ with a great and abiding devotion, our chief desire is to live with him and breathe his atmosphere. A preacher friend of mine and his lovely wife adopted two little children some years ago. One of them is a seven-year-old girl now and it is beautiful to see the way she loves her mother. She can hardly bear for her mother to be away from her, and it is difficult for her mother to leave the home without Jeannie. A while ago this adorable little girl said, "Mother, you are the most fortunate among women." "How so?" the mother asked. And Jeannie replied, "Because you can be with you all the time." The perfect compliment! Devotion akin to that in our attitude toward the Master of life will lead us into a fellowship with him that will affect our destinies.

Dr. and Mrs. John R. Mott are members of the church I am privileged to serve. On the 85th birthday of this great world statesman a number of us were gathered about the table with him, and his secretary told the story of a man who suggested to Mrs. Mott that it must be a most difficult and unsatisfactory thing to be married to a man who travels all over the world and is gone most of the time. Mrs. Mott lifted her head magnificently and said, "Sir, I'd rather be married to John Mott and see him only once a year than be the wife of any other man and see him all the time." That, too, is a perfect compliment. When men harbor in their minds and hearts an admiration and devotion like that for the character of Jesus, their destiny becomes inextricably tied in with his destiny, and Jesus knows where he is going, and so do the disciples who walk in the way.

Dying, We Live

The Master of life said, "He that would lose himself shall find himself . . . lose life to find life . . . be great by serving . . . save life by giving it away." We have been living in a world that thinks that in order to get ahead, you must be a go-getter. To conquer the world you must develop might. To

live successfully in the world you must have security. Our passion for security has almost ruined America and cost the church its life. Ministers who are primarily interested in security die before they live. The Christian movement got its start through the lives of men who accepted martyrdom that the world might get the good news. The pioneers of the church in America set out to spread scriptural holiness across this land and take the wilderness for God. Most of them were dead before they were thirty-three. So was the One who was their chief impetus and inspiration, Jesus Christ, the Master of life.

The Protestant movement was not a security campaign. Martin Luther knew very little of it. John Wesley didn't assume the world as his parish with the idea that that was the path of security. A young man was being interviewed for a job as an usher in a theater. The manager asked, "What would you do in case of fire?" The youth replied, "Oh, don't worry about me, I'll get out all right." And that's just it. Too many of us are interested only in how we are going to get out and what we are going to get out of it. That's why there is no world peace. That's why half the world is embraced in poverty while the other half lives in excess.

What Then?

If I should die before I live—what then? What a tragedy to go out of this world empty-handed. So many devote time and effort to accumulating that which we cannot take with us, when if we dared to really live by giving ourselves to others we could go out of this world with our hands laden with the things that are highly acceptable in the Kingdom of Heaven. What did Jesus take with Him? Well—a dying thief, little children, a dozen disciples, and the Christian church. When Simon asked Jesus what he would get out of it if he became one of his followers, Jesus reminded him, "Simon, it's not what you are going to get. It's what you are going to become—a son of God; Peter, the Rock."

Some years ago a young man opened a business in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, bottling red soda water. He joined a Methodist church and became active as a teacher and steward. His talents and skills were quite evident to the alert pastor, and increasingly his influence grew in the church and community. The minister confronted him after a couple of years with this, "How old are you?" "About thirty." "And how long do you expect to live?" The reply, "I don't rightly know." The minister continued, "When you stand finally before the Lord God, what will you tell him you did on earth —made red soda water?" The prosperous young bottler came back, "And what's wrong with red soda water?" The kindly pastor went on,"Nothing, my son, except you happen to be endowed with great talents and abilities which I cherish for God and the Christian ministry." As a consequence the young man's heart was inclined toward the ministry. He assisted his minister for a while and then enrolled in a Texas seminary. Completing his work he returned to Arkansas and began his intinerating. Endowed greatly with many abilities and powers, he was soon appointed to a vital church in Little Rock. Then he went to Oklahoma City, and presently to the First Methodist Church of Houston, Texas, with more than 2,500 members. After he had served there for about fifteen years the church had in excess of 6,000 members, the largest Methodist church in the world, with a program that was comprehensive and a faith with world horizons wrapped around it.

In 1948 this preacher was a delegate to the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. During the conference he was stricken with a heart attack. He returned to America and relaxed for a few months in Miami, Florida, under the care of his brother, who is a prominent doctor. Later he returned to Houston and his great church and started out again. Bless his heart—the strain was too much; he had to yield. After making plans for a part-time service in his alma mater, he and his wife went out to the country club for a round of golf. Sitting on the bench in the clubhouse, pulling on his shoes, he slumped over and then—that radiant spirit moved out of that tired body and he went home to the Father's house. Standing before the throne, he heard the Father ask, "Who are you, my son?" And he answered, "My name is Paul, Father—Paul Quillian." "And what did you do on the earth, Paul?" asked the Father. "I was the pastor of the First Methodist Church in Houston, Texas." And what a pastor he was!

What was it John said? "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." What if I should die before I live? What if I should die before I attain my selfhood? What if I should die before I develop a sense of destiny? What if I should die before I have learned and lived the principle of my Lord, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"? The way is open for everyone of us—the right to become children of God.

TESTING THE REAL

A Sermon for Children by Bert Wright

NO doubt the Queen of Sheba thought that she was entitled to be considered the wisest woman—just as King Solomon was said to be the wisest man in the world. The story is told that one day she paid him a visit with the express purpose of showing him up. Don't we all like to trip up clever folks! While King Solomon was wise in his sayings he was perhaps not entitled to be considered the wisest man in the world.

In the story the queen had an artist paint some artificial flowers which were really works of art. She took them with her on her journey, arranged them in some vases and placed them beside flowers of a similar variety which had been gathered in the palace garden. Thus in an equal number of vases were the real and artificial flowers placed some

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PULPIT PREACHING is very happy to announce that DR. CHARLES L. WALLIS is now one of its editors. He recently edited A TREASURY OF SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS, published by Abingdon-Cokesbury, which many are now saying is the best book of that type out today. Dr. Wallis will be giving a large portion of his time every month to making PULPIT PREACHING a most helpful homiletical journal.

DR. CHARLES L. ALLEN, pastor of the Grace Methodist Church in Atlanta, will continue as the other editor, Dr. Allen preaches to unusually large Sunday NIGHT congregations and his recent book, ROADS TO RADIANT LIVING, published by Revell, gives fifty of his most popular Sunday night sermons in summary form.

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little distance away from the king. She then gave the king her conditions: He must not touch or smell the flowers; standing away from them he must give his judgment as to which were real and which artificial.

Solomon faced a real poser. For a moment he was stunned. If he failed, then he would lose his reputation. What was he to do? He called his attendants and said, "Bring in the bees." The bees were brought in and as they left their hive he watched them alight on the real flowers in their search for honey. The queen, disappointed, had to admit that he was much wiser than she.

Day by day we are called to decide what are the real and priceless things in life. Let us be like the bees, quick to know the real from the false. Let us, like Solomon, never be afraid to "bring in the bees." We should seek the guidance of those who know the real things in the realm of our books, our music, our pictures, our prayers, our worship. As we seek to make life a wonderful thing let us ask the Savior to show us which are the things that will give us pleasure and make us rich in heart and life. If we follow Jesus we shall never be led astray by imitations, however real they look.

Pulpit Post

Whose Rooster Was It?

SIR: This is the first time I have written you—wonder how many letters start that way. But thank you for the good sermons and other helpful articles. The subscription will be renewed as long as there is a little money about.

But—on page 13 of the May issue of The Pulpit, in column two under the subtitle "False Dawns," Mr. Balcomb uses an illustration from Bishop McConnell; it is a good one and I want to use it sometimes.

But—on page 7 of the June issue Mr. Robinson, in column one says that Ralph Sockman tells of an Indian bishop telling the same story.

Before I use the story could someone tell us whose story this is?

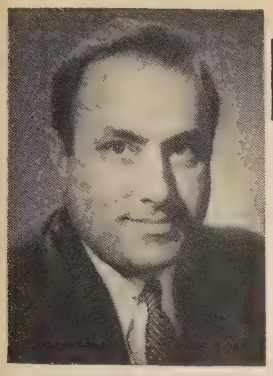
ROY M. BRADY,
District Superintendent.
The Methodist Church,
Independence, Kan.

Answer to Bosley Critics

SIR: I did not intend to speak until I saw the criticisms coming in, in the May issue of The Pulpit, relative to the Bosley sermon (February Pulpit). When I sent in my current subscription I asked for just such sermons as this one, "Christ Limited is Christ Betrayed," by Harold A. Bosley. Then when it does come with your commendation the wolves begin to howl.

You have given us so many discourses on watered-down, anemic, milksop philosophy as substitutes for declarative or expository sermons that I have been starved and discouraged. Bosley's is the best, meatiest, most worthwhile sermon you have given us in months and months. One critic objects because he did not give it a text, as may be his manner. Another objects to the title, his logic, his illustrations and the contention, and finally he objects to the way this sermon gets one to heaven. I thank God that it has more in it on which to go to heaven than anything his critics, as well as most contemporary writers, have offered in quite some time. If you can give us sermons of this quality and type in each issue of The Pulpit most of your readers will appreciate it much more.

RAY L. MCLESTER.
Methodist Church,
Joiner, Ark.



Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Quarterly Review of Sacred Music

A FINE COLLECTION of music can be a boon to the choir and a blessing to the finance committee. There is no better inexpensive way to purchase good music. The average anthem sells for about 18 cents, the price varying from 12 to 25 cents. The average collection is priced from 25 cents to a dollar, seldom below the former or above the latter figure. While some of these volumes have been on the market for many years, few choirs have taken advantage of them. Back in 1927, the Theodore Presser Company (Bryn Mawr, Pa.) published a book of 128 pages, FAVORITE SONGS OF THE PEOPLE. It has been selling steadily ever since, for 20 cents a copy; twelve or more copies, 15 cents each, and one hundred or more copies, 13 cents each. This yellow-covered book was aimed at the general public for singing schools, community sings, socials and general home use. But it contained, in addition to the usual patriotic, sentimental and humorous ballads, these numbers that can be used by the average church choir: "Glory Now to Thee Be Given" (Bach), "The Lord is My Shepherd" (Koschat), "The Palms" (Faure), "Jerusalm" (Parker), a simple arrangement of "Send Out Thy Light" (Gounod), the "Pilgrims' Chorus" (Wagner), "The Lost Chord" (Sullivan), "Songs my Mother taught me" (Dvorak), "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" (Ambrose), as well as miscellaneous hymns and spirituals. If a choir uses only the music mentioned, it will cost the church about 2 cents per anthem. These collections can also be used for youth gatherings, parties, socials and fellowship singing. Presser also puts out a GUIDE TO CHORAL MUSIC several times a year, mailed free to choir directors and churches upon request. These guides contain sample anthems, as well as lists of appropriate music for special occasions. The Spring 1951 issue contained 19 anthems and 215 listings.

ANOTHER similar collection, THE GRAY BOOK OF FAVORITE SONGS (enlarged edition) is published by Hall and McCreary Company (Chicago) at 40 cents each for fifty or more copies. This 160-page book contains good arrangements of "And the Glory of the Lord" (Handel), "Send Out Thy Light" (Gounod), "God So Loved the World" (Stainer), "Praise Ye the Father" (Gounod), "The Heavens Resound" (Beethoven), "Unfold Ye Portals" (Gounod; this is in the lower key of B flat, rather than the customary key of C, which will earn the well deserved gratitude of all sopranos, "In Heavenly Love Abiding" (Mendelssohn), and numerous hymns and spirituals. Thus six standard anthems are available for less than six cents each, as well as other songs, rounds, ballads and ditties for many other occasions. The same company has brought out THE S.A.B. CHORISTER, arranged by **Ruth Heller.** No price is listed, but it must sell for about 75 cents. This 63-page book contains three-part arrangements (soprano, alto, baritone) of 23 sacred choruses. It includes such favorites as "If with All Your Hearts" (Mendelssohn), "Panis Angelicus" (Franck), "Lead Me, Lord" (Wesley), two choruses from Mozart's *Twelfth Mass,* two religious rounds, called "canons" (Cherubini's "Like as a Father" and Thomas Tallis' familiar "All Praise to Thee My God This Night"). Junior choir leaders will be interested in the same publisher's GREAT HYMNS WITH DESCANTS, by Mead (31 pages, no price listed; may be 40 cents). It contains what the title indicates, twenty-five great hymns with descants. The hymns are universally known and loved; the descants are well prepared, although mixed junior choirs, unless very exceptional, cannot cope with high F's, G's and A's without straining.

THE Lorenz Publishing Company (Dayton, Ohio) offers EASY STANDARD ANTHEMS for the church choir. It is a practical volume of 96 pages, containing simplified arrangements of 26 anthems for mixed voices. Although some of the arrangements are too plain, there is enough good music here for the small nonprofessional choir to make the book worth the dollar it costs. These include "Bless the Lord O My Soul" (Ivanov), "The Lord is Mindful of His Own" (Mendelssohn), "Holy Art Thou" (Handel's "Largo"), Tschaikowsky's lovely "Légende," and other arrangements from the masters as well as the moderns. If only ten of these are sung, they will cost but 10 cents each. If all twenty-six are used, they will each cost less than a prewar soft drink or package of chewing gum. A choir working with a limited budget would do well to buy a few collections of anthems annually. Just as we seldom tire of singing "Holy, Holy, Holy," "O Worship the King" and "Safely Through Another Week" and use them constantly in corporate worship, so we rarely grow weary of Beethoven's "The Heavens Resound," Stainer's "God So Loved the World" and Roberts' "Seek Ye the Lord." Choirs should be able, without apology, to repeat an anthem every few months. A good anthem, like a hymn, is too valuable to be used once a year and then put away in ecclesiastical mothballs until its appointed hour rolls around again!

FROM the Edward Schuberth Company, (New York) comes THE FINEST ALBUM OF RELIGIOUS SONGS (60 cents), with eighteen solos and five hymns. Mathematicians can easily ascertain this to mean that the songs cost about 3.5 cents each, a real bargain. Among the solos included in this 96-page volume are "The Holy City" (Adams), "Calvary" (Rodney), "Alleluia" (Mozart), "Jerusalem" (Parker), "Agnus Dei" (Bizet) and "Eye Hath Not Seen" (Gaul). **Richard Maxwell,** of radio fame, has published a small book of nineteen easy-to-sing sacred songs and gospel solos. Entitled THE CHRISTIAN SOLOIST, it is published by Maxwell-Wirges Publications (701 Seventh Ave., New York; 75 cents). The 31-page booklet contains hymns and songs for medium-low voice by Maxwell, O'Hara, Shackley, Ballentine and other well known musicians. In addition to these suggested collections for choirs, there are many collections of organ music. The organist, too, could save a considerable amount of money annually by asking the music publishing houses to send new as well as standard volumes for examination before purchasing sheet music.

Singing Saints

O Christ! we follow in that way
Thou openest wide to men,
To stand within eternal day,
And sing the great amen!

JOHN W. SHACKFORD.

A Communion Sermon

By Edward Dowdy

Hiroshima—Plus Six Years

Jesus said, "Yet a little while is a light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you." John 12:35.

ON the first Sunday in August six years ago, as most of us were preparing for church, a solitary B-29 bomber was returning to its base on an island in the Pacific after having delivered the first atomic bomb. Hours later the name Hiroshima became a watershed for all human history. We had entered the atomic age.

Men began to say that a new era had been introduced. Some men who were frightened were beginning to predict that within ten years, men would have blown themselves off the face of this earth because of the awfulness of the thing that was uncovered, the tremendous power which was unleashed on that Sunday morning. In a split second tens of thousands of human beings had ceased to be. Tens of thousands more were wounded with radioactive wounds from which they yet die to this day. Men began to wonder what the future would be like. Shortly, the war was over. V-J Day was celebrated amid riotous rejoicing. Shortly, people began to speculate what the next decade would bring. Little did we realize that we were entering one of the most disturbing decades of history. Now, six years later, we have not been able to frame a peace treaty. We have had a "cold war," a Berlin "airlift" and more recently a "police action" in Korea.

Is there anything that this table has to say? Is there anything significant in the quietness of an upper room in Jerusalem long ago? Is there any message in that scene for the troubled and tumultuous world in which we now find ourselves? No one can tell what tomorrow will bring. There is abroad a kind of fear that the outburst in Korea is but a surface eruption and that, any place in the world, we may expect another eruption at any moment.

Today, six years after Hiroshima, we are still afraid. Recent tests on Eniwetok of bombs far more destructive than the earlier type led Representative F. Edward Hebert of Louisiana to write: "I have seen and heard the greatest explosion ever created by man in the history of the world. I had a feeling I was standing at the gates of hell looking into eternity. . . . I wonder, God, are we playing with things which belong only to you?"

Is there anything that I can speak of peace and serenity in the world today? But I must remind you that our world is not very much different from the world in which Jesus lived and gathered to himself that handful of fishermen in the long ago? Need I remind you that it was an army of occupation that marched the streets of Jerusalem? If one had listened quietly he could have heard, I am sure, the methodical plodding of the Roman soldier on police duty in the streets of Jerusalem. It was a world filled with fear. Some had hoped that Jesus was ushering in the revolution that would upset the powers that then prevailed. It was a world of fear and suspicion.

Similarity of Times

The very meal of which they partook was a remembrance of the Passover, the deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Every year as they came and broke the bread and ate the lamb around the table they were reminded that it could happen again and that only by the grace of God were they free. I imagine that even the disciples were afraid. You will recall that only a little while before Jesus had stood in the temple and had turned over the money-changers' tables and driven out the cattle. They were afraid because Jesus had come up against the most potent force in his world. He had dared to stand and rebuke the deeply entrenched religious system. Those disciples were not unaware of the danger that was theirs. But in the quiet of the upper room amid a world like that, Jesus called them to him around the table. Neither they nor any who have called themselves by the name of Christ have ever been quite the same after that experience.

We ought to know now as men have never known before the full significance of that line in the 23rd Psalm, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." We can find that same security at his table today. It is the best cure that I know for the hysteria of our world. Listen again to his quieting voice as across the centuries he is saying to each one of us today. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You believe in God, believe also in me. . . . I am the way, the truth and the life."

Security Needed

We need today as we have never needed before the security that comes from knowing what is in the Word of God. A full measure of calmness will be ours if we come to understand the eternal truth of our Father. We need less of the hourly headlines that disturb and more of the eternal Word which comforts. We need less of the news of the moment and more of the *good news* of the ages, if we would be still in a time like this.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," sang Israel's psalmist three thousand years ago, and it is just as true today. "Thy word must I hide in my heart lest I sin against thee" was not just the poetry of ancient Israel. It is an imperative for modern America.

Recently I talked to Dr. John Trever, the first man who had the privilege of unrolling those scrolls which were discovered in a cave by the Dead sea. I got a thrill as I talked with him and he told be about unrolling them on his bed and trying to decipher the ancient Hebrew, and finally with the help of another being able to read it and identifying it as the words of Isaiah. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God stands forever." "The voice said, Preach. And I said, What shall I preach? All humanity is as grass. . . . The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God endureth forever." There will come quiet confidence if we know that security.

All-Consuming Purpose

The second thing that will give us peace in our day is an all-consuming purpose for our lives. Today as never before we cannot allow our Christian faith to remain on the periphery of our experience. It can no longer hold us for an hour on Sunday morning and be forgotten during the week. It must be everything in our life or it is nothing. We must come to say as Paul said, "This one thing I do." Laying aside the weight that so easily drags us down and the sin that so easily besets us, we must run with steadfast-

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R. EDWARD DOWDY is no Methodist. His contribution was so timely the editors felt it should be included in this Methodist issue even though he happens to be associate minister of First Baptist Church, Washington, D. C. Hiroshima Day, the anniversary of the first atomic bombing, is August 6, a day to stress world peace.

ness the race which is set before us, confident that we do it in the presence of God.

People are afraid of communism today. In the first five minutes of any serious conversation people begin to talk about how much afraid they are of the communist scourge in our world. Korea is but an eruption of a deep underlying fear that is in the whole world. We can stop communist armies with greater armies. We can stop communist weapons with greater weapons. But the only way we will ever stop communism as a faith is with a greater faith. We who proclaim that Christ is Lord indeed ought never to be afraid because we have placed our faith and our trust in him, the living Son of God in whom all things hold together. That is the faith that will sustain us in our world today. Nothing else will, for we shall continue to be afraid unless we have that confidence that comes only from God.

The other day I met on the street a member of our church, a young man who suffered in the war that we thought was over six years ago and soon may be called for military service. There was a light on his face as he said to me, "Ed, I am not afraid any more." I don't know whether he knew he was using Paul's words or not but he said, "I know whom I have believed." Do you know the One in whom your faith is put? It is only that kind of Christianity, it is only the kind of faith, that will survive the world in which we live. It is only that kind of faith which has survived in any generation. We must at long last recognize that being a Christian is not just being a good fellow or being a good neighbor or having an air of respectability about us. If it is anything, it must be everything in our lives, and until we have committed everything to Christ we dare not face our world.

The Source of Light

Finally we need to be reminded of Jesus' words, "You are the light of the world." We who bear the name of Christ must be ever aware that we are the only hope and the only source of light in a darkening world. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of a single candle, but if you invert a glass over the candle it will soon extinguish itself. It is the nature of a candle to burn. When you cut off its opportunity to burn, then it ceases to be useful as a candle. It is the nature of a Christian to be the light of the world. The moment we stop being the light of the world, at that moment we cease to be Christians. Our great temptation today and in the days that lie ahead will be the temptation to become a part of the darkness rather than to continue as parts of the light.

Jesus prayed for his disciples, "I do not pray that thou shalt take them out of the world, but that thou shalt keep them from evil." That is his prayer for us—not that we should be isolated from the tumult and fears of our world but that in him we shall find our ultimate security. In the middle of a turbulent world Jesus gathered his followers around to assure them, "I am the way, the truth and the life." In our fear-ridden world only he dares to speak of peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I leave with you."

• *Only Religion Meets Man's Needs*

ALL religion begins with the knowledge that certain values come into life through meeting the requirements of religion. When R. H. Lowie, the anthropologist, said that man was religious 20,000 years ago and will be religious 20,000 years hence, he stated the case aright. Man is incurably religious. In the dim and distant past man discovered that he was better able to meet the difficulties of life if he fortified his inner spirit with prayer, ritual, or the rites of the tribe. Religion has lived throughout the ages because it yields values for survival and for richness of life that nothing else can provide. Man is incurably religious because in his hour of need and as he faces the deep moments of life, only religion will minister and answer the cravings of his lonely heart.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

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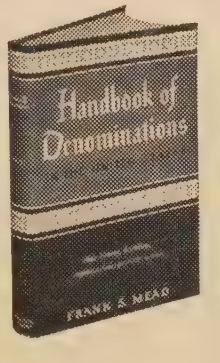

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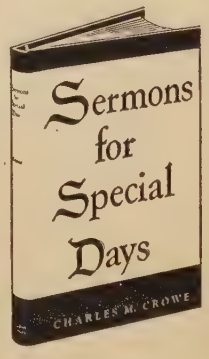

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Sermon Summaries

A Farmer Dazes a General Conference

THE Bethel *Daily Herald* surely carried large headlines the morning after Amos addressed the General Conference. Something really happened at this church meeting! Every succeeding generation has felt the impact of Amos' sermon, and many preachers quoted him last Sunday.

Three matters occupy our interest this morning—the man, his god, his message.

Amos was a man used of God. There is no way adequately to explain such a man and his accomplishments. But there are some factors that manifestly contributed to Amos' availability as a worker of God's purposes and a proclaimer of God's truth. The main factor seems to have been his education.

The only degree that Amos had was from the university of the desert. One who dwells in the desert must learn to interpret the silences. How penetrating the observation of Pascal that most of the evils of life arise from "man's being unable to sit still in a room." We educate for the noise when life's most sovereign secrets come out of the silences.

The desert dweller must learn also to interpret the noises. Every movement and sound in the desert has a crucial meaning. Is not our modern impotency the result of our failure to understand the noises and clamors of our day? And, too, he who dwells in the desert must learn to see the unseen and to find a companion in his loneliness. Amos found God!

Two things of vast significance can be said of Amos' God. He is a God of history. He lives and works in the midst of time and the daily happenings of men. He communicates with man. His purposes underlie the deeds of man. Nothing happens by chance. "Can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Two people do not meet in the desert except by arrangement. God may not approve all that happens, but he is not ignorant of it, nor can the happening escape his judgment.

Amos' God is a God of decency. Amos saw that religion was flourishing. Never were crowds larger or collections better. But something was wrong with this religion—terribly wrong! The rich luxuriated on beds of ivory and drank from vessels of gold, while the poor were in rags and hungry; they had no protection and judges could be bribed for a pair of shoes. God would not put up with such things! "Woe unto you who desire the day of the Lord!"

Amos had three grand principles which were the master lights of all his religious seeing. First, since a God of decency was ruling the world, when a people elected to live evilly they faced inevitable disaster. Second, peaceful days held horrors and injustices no less devastating than days of war. The atrocities of Damascus, Gaza and Edom were matched by the atrocities of those who "sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes"; of those who "pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor and turn aside the way of the meek." And third, The possession of great privileges demands a sense of great responsibility. The true sons of Abraham are Abrahamic in character. Amos saw no virtue in being the frazzled end of a glorious ancestry.

A Moving Argument

The preacher wished a transfer
to arrange
For he was dying for a
change;
And this the bishop promptly
sought to do,
For it was clear the church
was, too.

C. W. Vandenberg.

We leave Amos now, but Amos will not leave us. So long as the Bible is read, his will be one of the headline stories, worthy to be told in every issue of every daily paper. The text of his story should be on every masthead: "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."—*A. W. Beasley, Madison Heights Methodist, Memphis, Tenn.*

Needed: Men of Rock

HOW strange was Jesus' reply to Simon's great profession of faith that day in Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-18). For even as Jesus called Simon "the Rock" he realized that this disciple was anything but rocklike in character. Wasn't Simon the one who always spoke or acted first, and only then thought about what he had said or done? Was it not Simon who had been so overjoyed at seeing Jesus that morning on the lake that he had started out to welcome him—only then stopping to realize where he stood? Wasn't it Simon's quick temper that was always getting the little group into a scrape with the authorities? No, it was almost impossible to find a man of less rocklike nature than Simon Bar-Jonah.

But Jesus realized too that if his kingdom was ever to come it would have to come through the efforts of men just as unrocklike as Simon. If the Kingdom should ever come, it would have to be through men who would at times waver and compromise. He would have to use men of limited ability, and men whose enthusiasm and dedication would mount to great peaks but would soon waver and fall. Yes, he would have to use Peter and men just like Peter if the Kingdom was ever to become a reality among men.

But Jesus realized a third thing—and this was what made the difference. Peter *could become* rocklike. Peter might deny him three times as the world came crashing down about his ears—but then would come Easter and then Pentecost, and Peter would stand firm against a hostile world. Haled before the council for his preaching, would he cower and plead for mercy? No, defiance rang in his voice as he proclaimed that "we must obey God rather than men." True, Peter might be far from rocklike now, but it need not always be so. Poor, impetuous, foolhardy, unfaithful Peter could become a tower of strength, he could truly be the Rock.

We too may become rocklike Christians. We as Christian have the answer for the world's problems, the cure for the world's sin. Will we go on in our own self-satisfied, indifferent way, or will we turn to Christ in surrender and obedience? Only then will we hear the Master say, "Blessed are you, Tom . . . Jim . . . Mary . . . Jane. Blessed are you, for flesh and blood has not caused you to do this, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, from this day you shall be known as Peter, the Rock, and upon you and those like you I shall build my Kingdom."—*Robert L. Love, Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas.*

Security

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—Ps. 23:1.

THE modern word for what the psalmist expresses in this serene and confident statement is security. No man ever felt more secure than he. Yet he knew nothing of life insurance, old age pensions, social security, group health plans, and all the other devices by which modern man tries to achieve security. Is it possible for men and women today to feel as secure as the author of the 23rd Psalm? The Christian answer is Yes.

One way to achieve security is to learn as the psalmist did that security is an attitude and not a possession. "The Lord is my shepherd." That feeling of dependence on the Lord is the psalmist's source of security and therefore he can say confidently, "I shall not want." Christianity directs us to the ultimate source of security, a dependable God, and warns us against seeking it where it does not exist, in the possession of money and things.

Another source of security is the Christian belief that God controls the events of history and that he cannot be defeated by men. The destruction of our great urban centers, perhaps of all human life on earth, by atom and hydrogen bombs and bacteriological

(Continued on page 27)

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Recognizing God's Will*

THE vision of heaven is being seen these days in some rather unexpected places. A modern movie, "Broken Arrow," tells of a Civil War veteran, Tom. Sick of war, Tom became an Indian scout in the Comanche territory. Vicious Indian warfare, more terrible than anything theretofore seen, threatened the annihilation of white and redskin alike. One day Tom found a young Indian boy wounded and dying. The wells of divine sympathy caused him to save the boy's life and so started in him a contagion of faith in even the "murderous savage."

Armed only with courage he became an intermediary between Cochise, the Comanche chief, and the "Christian General" Howard, sent from Washington to bring peace to the frontier. Finally a temporary truce was arranged, only to be marred by the treacherous slaying of Tom's Indian bride. He had followed out God's will thus far, but now it seemed that he could not go on. But when he would have turned in bitterness against his fellow men, both General Howard and Chief Cochise told him that the death of his beloved would be a bond bringing peace between whites and redskins. As the movie ends Tom rides across the plains and his voice comes back saying, "At first I could not understand this but as the years have gone on I see in my beloved's murder the seal binding our two people in peace." That was the will of God, and a deep inner joy and serenity came to all those who saw the picture.

Would that his vision might become contagious in our wars! The will of man at first seems the only possible way, but eventually it crumbles in self-conflict, self-destruction—desiring goodness, accomplishing evil. Then through pain the will of man is supplanted by the will of God, of which we become aware first through humility, through feeling ashamed, and then through the vision of heaven, which brings us faith in the possibility that all Christ's teachings can be carried out. Indeed we accomplish them even now, paying the price and feeling the pangs of pain and suffering, knowing that we have learned of God's will for us.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

• *Seeking to Atone*

ONE of the greatest stories of World War II is "My Favorite Assassin." The newspaper accounts told how Adjutant Ernest Tessier, French Legion officer, captured 24 Nazis on the Tunisian front by merely shouting orders at them in perfect German.

His real story is much more dramatic. Tessier was one of the men who killed Walter Rathenau, Reich minister of foreign affairs, in 1922. Rathenau was the first and last Jew to represent Germany before the world. Two of his assassins committed suicide and Tessier was sentenced to 15 years in jail.

A few days after the assassination Tessier's mother received a letter from the mother of the murdered man. "In grief unspeakable I give you my hand," she wrote. "Say to your son that in the name and spirit of him he has murdered, I forgive, even as God may forgive, if before an earthly judge he make full and frank confession of his guilt and before a heavenly one repent. . . . May these words give peace to your soul."

Tessier was released from jail in 1927 and enlisted in the Foreign Legion. After the fall of France he quit the service, refusing Hitler's offer to return to the Reich. In February 1941, a friend encountered him in Marseilles. Tessier was dressed like a dock worker. He asked, "Do you know of any Jews I could help out of here? I have it in my power to secure exit visas, Casa Blanca permits and so forth. My specialty is running across the border to Spain." When Tessier had helped his seven hundreth person to escape over the Spanish border he asked the question, "Seven hundred to one. Do you think I have atoned for the life that I took?" During the last days of the war Tessier was known as the "one-man refugee committee."

Thus the first German to murder a Jew because of his race turned against the Hitler regime and tried to atone with his own life efforts for the injustice he had done, the life he took in the cause of humanity he had betrayed. This spirit still lives in men and gives us our hope for peace and the possibility for avoiding another war. Religion is concerned with dealing justly and having a life that God can use in huilding his Kingdom on earth.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Pulpit Calendar

Aug. 5—Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

Aug. 12—Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Tishah Beab (Jewish).

Aug. 19—Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Aug. 26—Festival of Christ the King.

Sept. 2—Labor Sunday.

Sept. 3—Labor Day.

Sept. 9—Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Sept. 16—Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Sept. 23—Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Sept. 26—New Zealand Day.

Sept. 30—Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

Sept. 30-Oct. 7—Religious Education Week.

Oct. 7—Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost; World Communion Sunday.

Oct. 14—Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

Oct. 21—Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost; World Order Sunday.

Oct. 21-27—United Nations Week.

Oct. 24—United Nations Day.

SEASONS: Whitsuntide and Kingdomtide.

ALTAR COLORS: Whitsuntide and Kingdomtide, green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

• *The Sentence of Life*

IN the opening footage of the motion picture "The Black Book," a picture of a black, leather-bound book (not the Bible) is shown, and these words are etched across the screen: "There is only one sentence in this book—the sentence of death." Christians have before them another black, leather-bound book, and once they have read it and made it their own, they will find etched in their hearts and minds these words: "There is only one sentence in this book—the sentence of Life." Read it!—*Robert J. Searls, Dundee Methodist, Dundee, Mich.*

• *Doing the Will Of God*

WHEN James K. Matthews of the Methodist Board of Missions was in India last year he met Bishop Lesslie Newbigin of the United Church of South India. He asked him how union in south India was working. Bishop Newbigin replied that the central concern was not the answer to that pragmatic question but to a deeper spiritual one. He said that for twenty years the churches met, discussing how they could work out the union, each group insisting on its own point of view. Two decades thus passed. Then they came to the clear agreement that it was the will of God that they should get together. Deciding thus that in obedience to the will of God they *would* get together, they found a great relief and release, and in ten years achieved that union. Bishop Newbigin added that their central con-

cern was not whether they were working things out in what would seem a successful way but whether they were doing the will of God.—*Eugene L. Smith, Executive Secretary, Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension, New York.*

• *Everybody's Doing It*

THE Institute of Propaganda Analysis lists several ways in which we are often led astray through popular appeals. *Name-calling* is familiar to all of us in these days of "Red purges" and Communist-baiting. *Glittering generality* is the method used by Hollywood press agents when they employ "colossal," "stupendous," or any of the other adjectives that have become commonplace in their trade. The *plain folks* technique is often used by politicians. One of the first things that a candidate for election must do nowadays is to prove that he is "a man of the people." He does this by having his picture taken while going through a factory or pitching hay on someone's farm. One of the most popular forms of propaganda appeal is the *band-wagon* approach. "Everybody's doin' it" is a phrase used not only by children but by their parents as well to show their motivation for senseless and meaningless behavior.—*Paul S. Kurtz, First Methodist, Reedley, Calif.*

• *Our God Is Able*

IN the book *The Far Lands* by James Norman Hall are some of the legends of the Polynesian people. Chief Tani and his pacifist people who worshiped Mauri the Peaceful were cast up by the sea on the island of a great and powerful tribe which worshiped the war-god Koro. There Tani was told to recognize the supremacy of Koro or die by Koro's priest. But this he did not do. Impressed by Tani's devotion to principle the chief of the warrior tribe, against the advice of Koro's priest, permitted Tani and his people to dwell there for a space. Through the years that followed Tani and his people never wavered in their faith. They built their homes and constructed their seagoing ships, awaiting the call of Mauri the Peaceful to voyage on. But Koro's priest planned their destruction. Tani had quietly assessed the situation and awaited only the still small voice—which came even after Koro's priest with all power in his hands miscalculated, to his own destruction and that of Koro, his bloodthirsty god.

Whether it is the legends of the Polynesians, the prophecies of Jeremiah or the simple steps that Tom, Dick and Harry, Alice, Sue and Edith take when we remain true to the moral principles to which we have committed ourselves, even to the extent of being willing to take the yoke of persecution upon ourselves, God will protect our homes and help our families.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

• *More Than a Sombrero Is Needed*

ABOUT three years ago a Mexican farmer stood in his field one day, and presently, curling up out of the ground, he saw a wisp of smoke. It continued to grow dense. Thinking there was a fire, the farmer took off his battered sombrero and started beating at the smoke to try to put it out. In a day or so a great fissure opened in the ground where the smoke appeared, and boiling lava seethed up out of it. In a week his entire farm was covered over. In the intervening years the entire neighborhood, the village and all the farms have been buried under the great new volcano erupting there. The farmer had tried to put out the fire of an erupting volcano with an old sombrero.

Today all mankind is sitting on top of a boiling, seething world revolution, and to meet it many are still sitting at home in the easy 1926, Coolidge-era fashion, with their feet up, their eyes closed, and with hat in hand, nonchalantly beating away at the smoke that curls about their feet, seeking to snuff out the fire that threatens to engulf them and their civilization.—*E. S. Hunt, Methodist Church, Oregon, Ill.*

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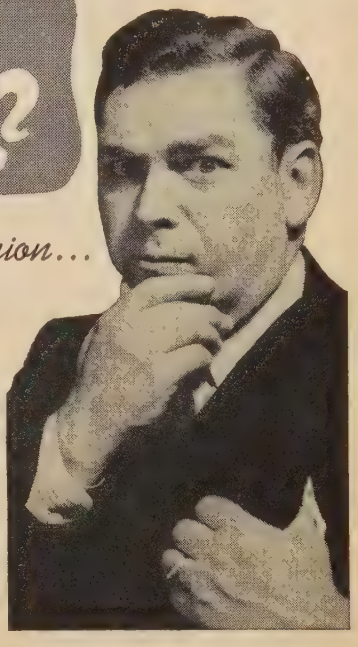

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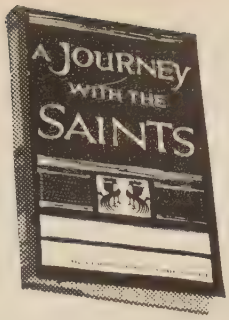

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'A Time to Keep Silence'

THAT there is a time to keep silence and that its scrupulous observance can be golden is one of the facts of life which many people find great difficulty in learning. One of my neighbors here in the sleepy little village on Cape Cod where I pass my summers frequently gives me most confidential information with a knowing wink and an appended "Keep it under your hat." Since I never wear a hat during the summer save on Sundays while *en route* between home and church, I always interpret the phrase figuratively. But the point is, the same information which comes to me goes to others also. And some of them, as I have long observed have never realized that the Lord God knew what he was doing when he gave men two eyes and two ears but only one mouth.

Sometimes the information is inconsequential. At other times it can be most disastrous. But the sort of individual who seems to have no filter between his ears or eyes and his mouth rarely discriminates between the two sorts. Whatever he hears or thinks he has heard is always ready for instant delivery. Frequently its precise source is mystically veiled: "Sum Wun has told me . . ." Who this ubiquitous and never sleeping Sum Wun is I have yet to discover. Perhaps after all as his name suggests, he is of Chinese extraction. If so, he would seem to be one Oriental who is distinctly expendable. But I am afraid he will prove immune to machine guns or even hydrogen bombs.

Not infrequently when I am made recipient of such information I have said to my informant: "I'll be glad to go to So-and-so and tell him the story you say is going around about him. He may know how to stop it—anyhow he should be informed." Such treatment I have found has its values. Invariably the source of information breaks a blood vessel in insisting that I do nothing of the sort, and generally I am freed from further unwelcome bits of gossip from him.

At other times the leak is not due to a faulty washer on the pipe to the oral cavity; instead it is very deliberate. The person wants to appear important, to seem to be in the know. He may be a clerk or a secretary—rarely is he a person of much authority—and he gets a big kick out of seeming to be a confidant of those who call the signals. When I hire a secretary, I always say the same thing: "Now let's get one thing straight at the start: Speed is very valuable, but it is secondary to accuracy; accuracy is all-important, but it is not to be compared with the ability to keep your mouth shut."

If there is one man beyond all others who needs to learn this lesson, it is the preacher. As a pastor, he is the man to whom people in distress and concern turn for help and guidance. That such is the case is one of the loveliest, if most exacting, aspects of our calling. And so often it is abused. I know the howl of protest which will go up from many preachers who have read this far in this particular column. I shall be deluged with a flow of indignant yelps regarding the sacredness of the confessional (or of its Protestant near-equivalent). Nevertheless I repeat my statement with deliberation: So often it is abused. I could give cases almost innumerable where I have seen with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, such dereliction—and from the most estimable men.

I am thinking of a very dear friend and former pastor. He was notorious for inability to keep confidences. When I was a very young minister I used to think that his confidences to me were strictly clerical, that he was trying to show me some of the problems of our profession—that his words to me were, so to speak, postgraduate instruction, and that he really meant it when he said: "I am telling this only to you." But I soon discovered that what was told me under that caption was told to many other of the so-called "leaders" in that church—was, in fact, part of his regular repertoire when engaged in pastoral calling. And the fact that I did so learn indicated that his "I am telling this only to you" meant very little to most of his people. The instruction which I gained, while not intended, has been very rewarding through the years.

Some years ago a prominent clergyman—his name is nationally known as a counselor—gave a lecture on counseling in my hearing. In it he retailed a most intimate case which he had had. It was highly explosive material, but the good doctor was very careful not to violate the sacred confidence of his holy office by giving any such clues as name, city, profession or date. Then three years later it was my misfortune

to hear the same man again, this time in a sermon. And he gave the other half of the story. Since I have a fair memory, I had no difficulty in making a positive identification.

Yes, there is a time to keep silence. I wonder if it could be one of those "apples of gold" which we used to read were kept in "pictures of silver."

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from 22)

warfare may be a possibility, but it is not a Christian belief. God made the world and the human race. There is a divine plan in operation. Within the limits of their freedom, man can go far in defiance of God, but not that far!

In the third place, we can find security in the fellowship of the church. Fellowship is the church's answer to the insecurity brought on by loneliness. Estimates of the number of people in the U.S. who have moved during the past ten years run as high as 30 million. Older patterns of life kept families and friends together. Today the grandparents may live in California, the children in Florida, and the grandchildren in New York.

The church can play a tremendously important role here. Dr. Elton Trueblood even speaks of the church supper as a "sacred institution." "We smile," he says, "at the church supper, but we are not wise when we do so. . . . In hundreds of parishes it is actually a more valuable experience than in the Sunday morning hour of worship." Surely a church is not worthy of the name if its members are allowed to feel lonely. The psalmist thought he would like to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Perhaps that was because nowhere else did he find such friendliness.

Finally, a sure way to find security is to grasp with renewed strength the ancient moral standards of Christianity. There is the same sort of security in these moral standards that a traveler finds in road maps and road signs. They point the way, distinguishing between the right and the wrong way.

A deeply ingrained sense of right and wrong is not a feature of our age. Mr. Kinsey makes his elaborate studies of sexual promiscuity and claims to be dealing with biology and sociology, not morality. His is a first-rate illustration of the modern refusal to interpret life in terms of right and wrong.

Nothing is more characteristic of Christianity than a highly developed sense of the rightness and wrongness of things. The Christian accepts the moral law as a part of God's creation. Like the psalmist he says of God, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." Under that leadership he feels a security that is unknown to all who try to live either in defiance or in ignorance of moral standards.—*Caxton Doggett, Rader Memorial Methodist, Miami, Fla.*

• *In a New Era*

The atomic bomb has ushered us into the vestibule of a new era, a vestibule in which there are weird symbols and the smell of death. Either we will become vigorous patrons and promoters of high religion which can create the spirit of adventure and good will, or with shameful indolence we will continue to ignore our mission and thereby contribute to the inevitable annihilation of man.

• *When Ritual Is Useless*

No ceremony on earth is valid in itself, whether it is saluting a flag, repeating a creed or bowing at an altar. To believe that such an act has intrinsic value is to believe in pagan mysteries. Ritual is useless unless it influences thinking.—*Virgil A. Kraft, Methodist Chaplain at the University of Chicago.*

Epitaph

(Post-Atomic Era)

Here lies the Man of Magic
Deep beneath the sod;
He got his every gadget,
But forgot his God.

C. W. Vandenberg.

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THE ABINGDON-COKESBURY AWARD has been established to encourage the writing of distinguished books in the broad field of evangelical Christianity. The award is offered at intervals of approximately two years to the author of the book manuscript which, in the opinion of a Board of Judges, *will accomplish the greatest good for the Christian faith and Christian living among all people.*

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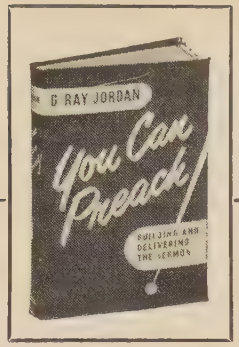

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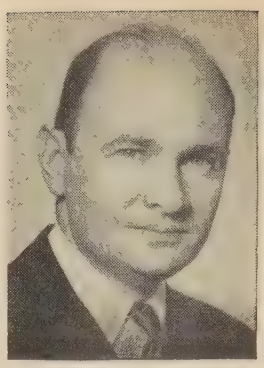

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

The Second Movement

THE SECOND MOVEMENT of the liturgy varies greatly in the different churches. Anything is likely to be done, from the announcement of a "singspiration" to the presentation of assorted lay speakers. Between the two, there may be sandwiched various prayers, hymns, anthems and other congregational exercises.

Nevertheless, there are certain characteristics of worship's second movement which ought to be reflected in the liturgy if a particular church desires its service to be psychologically sound and in the best liturgical tradition. Following the first movement of adoration, the congregation may move in the proper direction to a genuine experience of fellowship or communion with God. In this experience there may be an interchange of the Divine Mind and the human mind, leading up to the third and climactic movement of dedication.

If a church desires to give the people an opportunity in the service for the confession of sin, it may follow liturgical tradition and open this second movement with such an expression of confession. Traditionally, this has been the point where the general confession is placed. It occurs in the Roman mass, directly after the invocation and introductory sentences. In Anglican morning and evening prayer it is placed directly after the opening sentences of Scripture and opening hymn. In the services of John Hunter, whose devotional services are well known to American churchmen, it is again placed after the introductory sentences and the invocation. In the newer services, which churches are using in their return to traditional worship, the confession of sin is again placed at this point.

Such procedure is psychologically sound, for it is natural that the human spirit, after confronting the glory of God in adoration, should experience humility. In contrast with God's righteousness and glory, how sinful the human spirit apears to be. It is natural to feel this awful contrast, and in a mood of contrition and self-abnegation the worshiper cries out to God for forgiveness. Long before the psychology of religion was a science, the author of the sixth chapter of Isaiah recognized the psychology of religion in recording Isaiah's humility in the presence of Almighty God and his cherubic choir: "Woe is me for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips . . ."

It is interesting to study the traditional confessions of sin. The confiteor of the Roman mass is not as well known among Protestants as are some of these other confessions. It is direct in its approach: "I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever virgin . . . to all the saints and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. . . ." The beautiful and honest general confession of Anglican matins, which begins with the well known words, "Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," is familiar to all. There have been many confessions of sin written and used in contemporary Protestant worship, among them the fine confessions by John Hunter.

Some churches object to the inclusion of confession of sin at this point in the liturgy. They feel that such an important experience is not given adequate attention by the repetition of a single prayer. If people are to experience the reality of penitence and the honesty of confession, then more ample opportunity and movement for this experience must be provided in the liturgy. Such churches omit in the ordinary of worship the confession of sin, preferring to magnify the experience at the time of Holy Communion or at some other time when the major portion of an entire service is devoted to that important matter. Other churches, by attitude and emphasis, find this weekly confession of sin a salutary and healing experience.

If the confession of sin occurs during this movement of the liturgy, there must also be provided opportunity for prayers for absolution and a sense of forgiveness. The psychology of this is obvious. After acknowledging their sins, people are entitled to know that God is ready to forgive those sins. In the historic liturgy, absolution is granted at this moment, as in the Roman mass and the Anglican service. In Protestant worship, this takes the form of prayers for absolution and forgiveness. Again, many fine prayers of this nature are available. With such prayers go the Gloria or a canticle of praise which expresses the joy of the penitent who now stands a new man in the presence of God. *(To be continued.)*

Preachers in Print

Coworkers in the Kingdom

LIFE in a parsonage is not quite the "goldfish bowl" existence Welthy Honsinger Fisher makes it seem in HANDBOOK FOR MINISTERS' WIVES (Woman's Press, N.Y.C., $2.00). Perhaps it is just that I am as blissfully unaware of the facts of parsonage life as the goldfish of the restrictions of his bowl. It is certainly true that a minister's wife marries not only the man but also his profession. Indeed, the unique requirements imposed on both husband and wife by the ministry would be maritally disastrous in most other professions. And since ministers' wives are only human, a book on study and training that will help them succeed in their chosen vocation such as Mrs. Fisher has written will prove a great help. Herself a minister's widow, the author brings wide experience and deep insight to her task.

NEW members of "the sisterhood of parsonage queens" will find the handbook of great help, particularly if they concentrate on the positive portions of the volume and do not become too dismayed by descriptions of the problems and disadvantages inherent in the job. After all, even for the preacher's wife most troubles come one at a time. But this book should be read by every minister's wife, no matter how many years of experience she has to her credit. She will be helped by the inspiring first chapter, "The Man You Married." Most of us need occasionally to be reminded of the scope and richness of the calling of the ministry. It helps to see our husbands as others see them. She will be helped, too, by suggestions about her own spiritual growth. In regard to the more practical side of parsonage life, she can check her practices with the standards set up by Mrs. Fisher to see whether she is keeping the fine balance between being a mother and homemaker and serving as the "first lady of the parish." It comforts most of us just to know that thousands of others share our same problems, face our same difficulties. For all of us Mrs. Fisher has sound wisdom and valuable advice. This is especially true of such chapters as "Managing Your Household Time," "Children of the Parsonage," and "Your Place in a New Parish."

THE minister's wife who reads this handbook carefully and applies its suggestions judiciously is more likely to be listed by the congregation as a great asset rather than as a discouraging liability to her husband in carrying out his pastoral duties. Hence, every preacher's wife should read the book. More than that, ministers should read it, too. It would give them new insight and make them more understanding and considerate ministers' wives husbands, an extra-curricular activity that ought to be of great concern to most of them.

DOROTHY TURK.

(Mrs. Turk is the wife of Paul Turk, pastor of Euclid Avenue Methodist Church, Oak Park, Ill.)

ROUNDUP

FINNEY LIVES ON. By **V. Raymond Edman.** Revell, $2.50. A study of the life, message and methods of Charles G. Finney (1792-1875). Entire interpretation is in the language and theology of the "fundamentalist." Author implies identification of Jonathan Edwards and Finney with Billy Sunday and Billy Graham. Repeatedly he seeks to justify Wheaton College's 60-hour continuous "revival" in 1950 by reference to Finney's message and methods. Book leaves much to be desired. Main value to reader is in compiled historical material and excerpts from Finney's writings. Finney will live on, but this book contributes very little to his immortality, at least for this reader.—*Hoover Rupert, First Methodist, Jackson, Mich.*

A BETTER HOPE. By **Charles Ray Goff.** Revell, $2.00. These 19 sermons preached in Chicago Temple—the Methodist skyscraper—undoubtedly made better listening than they do reading. Goff is an extemporaneous preacher, which may account for both his personal popularity and the lack of literary style in the published sermons. There are a good many "off the subject" paragraphs. Although there are not many direct "quotes," the author shows familiarity with literature and theological movements. The introductory essay about Dr. Goff, his call to the temple and his great success there is inspiring. This pastor does have a vital message.—*C. Willard Fetter, First E. U. B., Akron, Ohio.*

FIFTY YEARS OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGY. By **Carl F. H. Henry.** Wilde, $1.50. Pastors of "American evangelicalism" will find the last section of this evaluation of recent Protestant theology helpful and stimulating. The thesis of the author, who is a graduate of Wheaton College and Professor of the philosophy of religion at Fuller Theological Seminary, is that the evangelical movement, in glorifying the work of the evangelist, has neglected the areas of biblical and theological scholarship. He feels that the need to evangelize is no excuse for intellectual laziness, and calls for more scholars of the evangelical school to think, teach and write. He strikes pure gold at places: "We have much to learn from those with whom we differ . . . and they have much to learn from us." Amen and Amen!—*Alton M. Motter, Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

DEEP IS THE HUNGER. By **Howard Thurman.** Harper, $2.50. The title of this book is an apt description of it. In a series of meditations which are concise and beautifully written, Dr. Thurman leads the reader close to the source of reality by portraying the deep hunger of men for spiritual certainty. The meditations are grouped under four headings: "A Sense of History," "A Sense of Self," "A Sense of Presence" and "A Quiet Time." By use of the ordinary experiences of life the author reveals a depth of understanding which brings the reader to re-examine himself, to sort out his bewildered thoughts and to find out what he really believes about the ultimate nature of things. The result is the birth of a new sensitivity to the realities of spiritual strength. The book suggests many seed thoughts which can grow into sermons. An excellent volume for the minister to keep at his side for daily meditation.—*J. Oscar Lee, Executive Director, Dept. of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of Churches.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

An analysis based on reports from leading religious book sellers and from the reading of The Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.

June	July	This Month	
	4	1	**Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power.** *Paul Blanchard. Beacon Press,* $3.50
	1	2	**With Singleness of Heart.** *Gerald Kennedy. Harper,* $2.00
1	3	3	**So We Believe, So We Pray.** *George A. Buttrick. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $2.75
6	2	4	**Wake Up or Blow Up.** *Frank C. Laubach. Revell,* $2.00
		5	**Strengthening the Spiritual Life.** *Nels Ferre. Harper,* $1.00
3	5	6	**Here I Stand.** *Roland Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $4.75
	7	7	**If This Be Religion.** *Frederick K. Stamm. John Day Co.,* $1.75
4	9	8	**Life of Jesus.** *Edgar J. Goodspeed. Harper,* $3.00
	6	9	**God in Education.** *Henry P. VanDusen. Scribners,* $2.00
	10	10	**Public Relations Manual for Churches.** *Stanley I. Stuber. Doubleday,* $3.00

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE ANNIVERSARY of the beginning of the war in Korea found the nation sick and resentful of the whole project. Impetuously launched without authority from Congress, it was expected to reach a swift and decisive ending and vindicate the principle of collective security under the United Nations. It has failed to do this. Instead, it has exposed the weakness of this principle by demonstrating that, in a case of aggression, the collective bond is not so strong as the special interests and purposes of the particular nations. This applies, of course, to Russia, which trained the North Korean army and supplied it with weapons and materials, and unquestionably did the same for the Chinese troops and gave its moral backing in the aggression. But it applies also to the very nations which joined the U.S. in resisting the aggression. The British interests in China acted as a curb upon the conduct of the war and reduced it to a stalemate of terrible slaughter. We could go further and say that it was not simple devotion to the abstract principle of collective security that cast the U.S. in the heroic role of a defender of world peace. The moral principle in this instance of aggression coincided with our national interest in the Pacific. At the moment of this writing, negotiations are in process for an armistice, with some prospect that a settlement on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* will be accepted by both war-weary sides. Such an inglorious outcome will neither strengthen the collective security principle in U.N. nor bring heroic honor to the U.S. But the whole abortive adventure may, please God, start the nations in search of a better way to preserve peace than by making war. We cannot foresee what this way might be, but, like the Quakers, we must never give up.

The Korean War Anniversary

The Book of the Month

LUTHER'S PROGRESS TO THE DIET OF WORMS, *by Ernest Gordon Rupp. Wilcox & Follett, 1255 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, $2.00.*

YOU are looking forward to Reformation Day next October and will probably wish to take at least one book on your vacation that will orient your mind in this direction. Here is a small book by a British scholar which I have found most fascinating and informative. It deals with the young Luther from boyhood up to the momentous event when he faced the diet of Worms. The author has availed himself of the exciting discoveries of the past thirty years which have thrown new light upon the young Luther and especially his years as student, monk, professor and preacher. How the ideas which became the battle cries of the Reformation developed in his mind, how his own spiritual struggles conditioned the emergence of these ideas, and how his advocacy of them within the academic cloister finally burst forth into the public forum with consequences that shook the Western world—all this is told with trustworthy scholarship and rare charm. Some myths are discredited—for example, the story of his illumination as he climbed the stairs of the Scala Sancta in Rome is set down as a fable. But the author retains as substantially factual the story of Luther's decision to become a monk amid the threatening lightning flashes of a thunderstorm. You will find here a corrective of much that has passed for knowledge in the older treatises.

A Thought for the Month

PROGRESS toward Christian unity is slower than it might be because of the large majority of the Christian peoples and their leaders have not yet awakened to the possibility of a church nearer to the mind of Christ than the churches we now have. The ecumenical movement elicits the sentimental approval of most people, but it has not yet kindled their imagination. Of course, it must eventually grip the conscience, but it will not do so until the imagination is stirred to transcend the denominational system of churches. Our minds have been molded by our sectarian traditions and the deep involvement of our loyalties in one denomination. The effect of this walled-off Christian fellowship is to blind us to the impoverishment of our Christian experience as compared with the possibilities of enrichment that would be open to us were these walls of separation removed. The human mind does not consciously miss something it has never envisaged as a possibility. The deficit in our spiritual life due to our sectarian isolation can hardly be realized until our imagination is quickened by the vision of something far better. Happily, there are many among us who are beginning to comprehend the meaning of St. Paul's dictum: "All are yours"! They are becoming aware that they have been cheated of something inestimably precious by the necessity of living the Christian life in a mere fragment of the Church of Christ. They long, however vaguely, for a different kind of church from that to which they now belong—a church with the whole sky, not merely a patch of sky, over it, a church with broader interests and worthier loyalties, with a wider fellowship and more realistic promise than is possible in our denominational separateness. The ecumenical task is to heighten this vision where it exists and to awaken it in those not yet touched by it.

An Ecumenical Imagination

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

We take pleasure in presenting our first annual denominational issue. Next year the August issue will be devoted to the Disciples of Christ. This year the Methodist have the floor. The sermons in this issue have been personally selected from their barrels by the Methodist preachers our readers voted they wanted to hear. That accounts for the length of some of them, which accounts for the fact that one brother we had hoped to present got left out.

Sockman First Choice

After the announcement in the April Pulpit that this would be a Methodist issue, our readers really got busy. Some sent in the clipping but more wrote giving their reasons for the choices they made. In a close finish, Ralph W. Sockman was the first choice of those voting.

After Dr. Scotford's article the admirers of Christ Church's great preacher-pastor were determined that he should not be overlooked. Second among the more than 100 Methodists nominated was Bishop Gerald Kennedy. Third in the list was Harold Bosley. Unfortunately, Dr. Bosley is out of the country and could not be reached for a sermon for this issue. We at the Christian Century Foundation were happy to see our judgment vindicated by these returns. All three of these preachers are editorial associates of The Pulpit.

Many Others Listed

In addition to the sermons by Dr. Sockman and Bishop Kennedy, this Pulpit brings messages from Albert Edward Day, Russell J. Humbert and John Branscomb. We had hoped to get in a sermon by Wallace Hamilton, pastor of the Pasadena Community Church (Methodist), St. Petersburg, Florida. But because of the length of the manuscripts his brethren submitted (his was even longer!), space requirements prevented our doing so. However, his sermon is all set up and you will enjoy reading it in an early issue. Other preachers who many wanted to hear included W. R. Cannon, Marshall Steel, Bishop Arthur J. Moore, Pierce Harris, Clovis Chappell, Roy L. Smith, Gaston Foote, Charles Allen, Bishop Richard Raines, Henry Hitt Crane, Harry W. Backhus, John Knox, Chester A. McPheeters, Harold Paul Sloan and John Paterson. Dr. Foote is currently preaching a series in The Pulpit, the last of which will be printed next month.

Let us know your reaction to this denominational issue. Do you think the idea good enough to be continued in future years? We repeat what we have so often said before. You readers are the editors for whom we serve as proxies. We want your comments and and advice. Don't fail to let us know what you think about the job we are doing in your behalf.

G.E.H.

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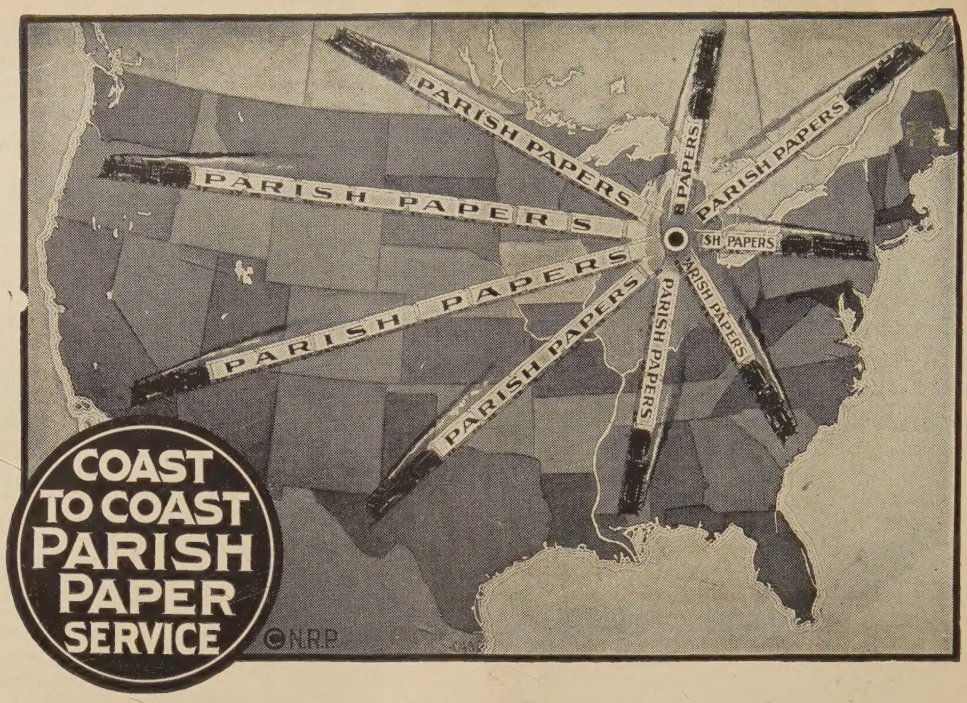

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